The Ultimate
Love Square
Shadow K.

Description

Four friends. Four confessions. A love square that could destroy everything—or create the ultimate couples. Who will end up with whom, and will their hearts survive the ride?

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Chapter 1: Welcome to Nexas – Class of 2030

Nexas College. The name alone carried weight. Gleaming towers, immaculate gardens, and state-of-the-art labs stretched as far as the eye could see. Only the top students from around the world earned a seat here—and today, the Class of 2030 was stepping onto campus for the very first time.

Ariel Tanaka Ren stood at the gates, clutching her acceptance letter like it was a lifeline. Her heart pounded. Years of relentless exams, endless late-night studies, and sacrifices had led her here. She took a deep breath. This is it. I made it.

And then, disaster struck.

From the left, a shadow approached—Eden Sato Akari. Calm, composed, and frustratingly perfect, he walked with that confident ease that made everyone around him pause. Ariel's stomach did a flip. Focus, Ren. Breathe. Don't trip. Don't trip.

Before she could even steady herself, a blur came from the right. Minato Yamamoto Hikaru—grinning like mischief incarnate—tripped on a crack, somersaulted, and sent Ariel's books flying into the air. Papers fluttered like leaves in a storm, landing on students, statues, and one very confused pigeon.

"Oh no, no, no!" Ariel scrambled to gather her things, but Minato stepped on the edge of her backpack, sending her sprawling into… Eden. Their shoulders collided, and for a moment, the world narrowed to awkward proximity, and Ariel's face turned tomato-red.

From a nearby bench, Hina Watanabe Yūki let out a gasp so dramatic it could have broken a glass. "Ariel! You can't start your first day like this!" she exclaimed, flailing her hands with such intensity it looked like she was conducting an invisible orchestra.

"Why am I here?" Eden muttered, pinching the bridge of his nose.

Minato shrugged, grinning mischievously. "Oh, don't mind me. I just like to test gravity… on other people."

Ariel groaned. Perfect. First day at the world's best college, and I'm already a walking disaster zone.

Hina, meanwhile, had crouched to pick up one of Ariel's papers and then dramatically held it to her chest. "We must restore order! The honor of Nexas depends on it!"

Eden stepped back, sighing. “Let’s just… survive the first hour.”

Minato winked at Ariel. “Good luck, rookie. You’re going to need it.”

And as Ariel straightened, gathering her scattered papers for the second time, she caught

Eden’s gaze for a fleeting moment. Something about that look made her heart thump harder.

Great, she thought. This is how my first day at Nexas begins. Chaos, drama, and… maybe trouble.

Little did she know, this was only the beginning of the ultimate love square, where chaos would collide with romance, and nothing—not even order itself—would survive.

Chapter 2: The Beginning of the Love Square

The first month at Nexas College was nothing short of a rollercoaster. Ariel Tanaka Ren quickly realized that attending the world's best college didn't just mean challenging classes or brilliant professors—it meant living inside a storm of chaos, laughter, and moments that made her heart act like it had its own heartbeat.

It all started with Eden Sato Akari. Calm, collected, impossibly perfect, and frustratingly aware of everything around him, he moved through the campus with a grace that made Ariel feel clumsy just for existing. The first time their hands brushed while passing a stack of books in the library, her heart had skipped a beat. It was brief, fleeting, almost meaningless—but the memory replayed in her mind over and over, refusing to let her focus on anything else.

Then there was Minato Yamamoto Hikaru. Minato's existence was a walking contradiction: charming, teasing, and relentless in creating chaos wherever he went. He had an uncanny ability to turn even the simplest moment—like opening a door—into a catastrophe. Yet, for some reason, Ariel couldn't stop laughing at him, even when he made her spill her notes or trip over her own feet. There was something about the way he grinned after a disaster, as if the world itself existed to entertain him, that made her pulse race.

Hina Watanabe Yūki, dramatic and precise, seemed to float rather than walk. Every spill, every minor mishap, every whisper of wind that messed up her perfectly arranged notes became a performance worthy of applause. And yet, when Eden quietly helped her retrieve her scattered papers, offering a faint smile, she felt a flutter she refused to name.

By the third week, the subtle sparks between them had started to form into something undeniable. Ariel noticed the way Eden's gaze lingered for a fraction longer than it should have when she answered a question correctly. She caught herself daydreaming about him at night, remembering the way his calm presence made the chaos of her life feel manageable.

At the same time, Minato's constant teasing, his playful nudges, and the laughter he pulled from her even on the worst of days left her with a confusing warmth in her chest. There were moments when his hand brushed hers—too brief to be anything intentional, yet enough to make her heart leap.

Eden found himself noticing Hina more than he expected. Her exaggerated reactions, her dramatic sighs, the way she cared deeply about everything—even the smallest details—intrigued him. There was something magnetic about her intensity, something that made him pay attention in ways he never had before. And Hina, for her part, found herself torn between the steady calm of Eden and the chaotic energy of Minato, feeling her heart tugged in directions she didn't understand.

It all came to a head one late afternoon in the campus gardens, golden sunlight stretching shadows long across the stone paths. Ariel was helping Hina gather papers blown about by the mischievous wind when Minato appeared, offering his hand with theatrical flair. “Need a lift, fair maiden?” he asked, grinning like the world was his stage. Ariel rolled her eyes but

accepted, brushing past him with a fluttering heart she refused to acknowledge.

Eden, walking nearby, happened to catch sight of the scene. His lips curved into a faint, almost imperceptible smile, and for a moment, everything else faded from his awareness. Hina, standing slightly too close to him without noticing, felt her cheeks heat up in a way that confused her entirely.

The wind shifted, sending one of Ariel’s papers tumbling through the air. Minato instinctively reached for it, his hand brushing against hers again. Eden’s gaze flickered toward the motion, and in that instant, none of them spoke—but every unspoken feeling was there, electric in the air: Ariel’s heart beating for Eden yet laughing with Minato; Eden intrigued by both Ariel and Hina; Minato’s teasing carrying warmth he didn’t dare show; Hina’s fascination with Eden clashing with the thrill of Minato’s chaos.

By the end of the month, the four of them were bound together by laughter, chaos, and moments that made their hearts beat faster than they wanted to admit. Ariel sat on a bench one evening, watching Eden help Hina with her notes while Minato made ridiculous faces in the background. She let out a small sigh, her chest tight with a feeling she couldn’t quite name.

Somewhere deep inside, Ariel realized she had fallen for Eden—the calm, perfect, frustratingly composed Eden Sato Akari who made her feel safe and alive all at once.

Eden, meanwhile, found himself drawn to Hina. Her dramatic energy, her fiery intensity, and the way she refused to be anything less than spectacular captivated him in ways he hadn’t expected.

Hina’s heart, in turn, fluttered for Minato. There was something irresistible about his chaos, his grin, his teasing that left her laughing and flustered at the same time.

And Minato… Minato found himself thinking about Ariel constantly—the way she laughed at his antics, the way she stumbled but never gave up, the warmth in her smile that no prank could erase.

But of course, nothing was simple. Because as much as Ariel’s heart leaned toward Eden, there was also Minato, with his charm and laughter pulling at her in ways she couldn’t resist. Eden’s attention toward Hina didn’t go unnoticed, stirring feelings in him for Ariel too—he couldn’t deny the small sparks whenever she looked at him. Hina found herself stealing glances at Eden even while thinking about Minato. And Minato… well, his thoughts kept bouncing between Hina and Ariel, leaving him dizzy in the most infuriatingly delightful way.

It was a mess. A beautiful, chaotic, heart-tugging mess.

Ariel sighed, watching the sunset glow over Nexas College, realizing that love was never simple. Ariel had fallen for Eden, Eden for Hina, Hina for Minato, Minato for Ariel—but in the background, Ariel couldn't ignore the pull toward Minato, Eden's glances toward Ariel lingered longer than they should, Hina's eyes followed Eden secretly, and Minato's heart secretly tilted toward Hina. Ugh. It was maddening.

So this was the beginning of the ultimate love square… tangled hearts, misdirected feelings, and chaos waiting to explode.

Chapter 3: Festival of Fireworks

The air at Nexas College buzzed with excitement. Lanterns swayed, colorful banners fluttered, and the scent of sizzling street food filled the campus streets. The annual Festival of Fireworks was here, and it was the one event that students, faculty, and even staff looked forward to with almost childish glee.

Ariel Tanaka Ren adjusted the strap of her bag and sighed. She had promised herself she would enjoy the festival without tripping over someone, spilling food, or causing a scene. Naturally, that plan lasted exactly five steps.

“Watch out!” someone shouted. Ariel turned—and collided headfirst with Minato Yamamoto Hikaru, who was balancing a tray of three ridiculously large bubble teas. The drinks wobbled dangerously before toppling over, drenching both of them in sticky, sweet liquid.

“Really? Really?” Ariel groaned, looking at him as if he personally hated her.

Minato grinned, unfazed. “Relax, Princess Tanaka. It’s only tea. And a little sugar never hurt anyone—except maybe your dignity.”

Ariel narrowed her eyes. “You know, some people walk around, Minato. Some people don’t make disasters happen just by existing.”

He winked. “Ah, but where would the fun be in that? Honestly, if chaos were an art form, I’d be Picasso.”

Before Ariel could reply, a calm, almost infuriatingly perfect voice said, “I think they call that gravity.”

Eden Sato Akari was standing there, holding a clean tray of bubble tea like none of this had ever happened. His expression was calm, but the faint arch of his eyebrow screamed judgment. Ariel’s cheeks warmed. Eden was everywhere, always appearing at the perfect—or most inconvenient—moment.

“And you,” Eden said, looking at Minato, “might want to learn how to walk without causing a global incident.”

Minato bowed theatrically. “Yes, Master Eden. I’ll practice daily… with Ariel as my assistant, of course.”

Ariel groaned again. Why did chaos follow him like a shadow?

Nearby, Hina Watanabe Yūki was dramatically shielding her meticulously organized festival guide from the wind, her hair practically glowing under the lantern lights. When she saw Ariel

and Minato dripping with bubble tea, she gasped. “What… what did I just witness?!”

Minato grinned at her. “Your future happiness, maybe? Or at least a sticky start to the evening.”

Hina flailed. “I swear, if either of you ruin my festival, there will be consequences!”

Eden sighed, running a hand down his face. “It’s fine. Let them live.”

Minato smirked at Eden. “Aw, look at you, brooding over a cup of tea like a wise old monk. You do realize this is a festival, right? Not a philosophy lecture?”

Eden raised an eyebrow. “Better a lecture than a walking disaster zone.”

Minato laughed, then turned to Ariel. “Seriously, are you always this clumsy, or is it just because I’m around?”

Ariel threw a napkin at him. “You’re impossible!”

“That’s the point!” Minato shouted, catching the napkin and pretending to bow. “Impossible is my middle name… well, actually it’s Hikaru, but close enough.”

That evening, the four of them wandered through the festival together, though the word “together” was more like a chaotic cluster of awkward proximity. Ariel found herself laughing too much at Minato’s endless teasing, Eden shooting occasional calm glances at her, Hina shrieking dramatically at every little scare, and Minato—of course—roasting both Eden and Ariel simultaneously.

They reached the fireworks stage just as the first rocket lit the sky, bursting in a kaleidoscope of colors. In a moment of distraction while reaching for a snack, Ariel’s hand brushed against Minato’s—just barely, accidental enough to feel electric, but long enough for both of them to notice. Her chest jumped, and she quickly pulled back, mortified.

Minato’s grin widened wickedly. “Oops… did I just break the laws of physics and Ariel’s heart at the same time? That’s gotta be a new record.”

Ariel groaned, face heating. “You’re impossible!”

Eden, watching the exchange with a small, almost amused smile, shook his head. “If one of you trips again, I’m leaving you in the middle of the festival.”

Hina, meanwhile, was muttering under her breath. “Honestly, if chaos had a mascot, it would be Minato. Or Ariel. Or both.”

Minato leaned toward Ariel and whispered, “Careful, Princess, if you keep brushing hands with me, I might start thinking you like me. Dangerous territory.”

Ariel swatted his arm. “Shut up, Minato!”

As the grand finale lit up the sky, all four of them froze, mesmerized by the colors painting the night. Sparks reflected in their eyes, hearts beating faster than the rockets above. And somehow, in that chaos of laughter, teasing, roasting, and flashing lights, the tangled love square tightened its grip.

Ariel leaned toward Minato slightly, trying not to notice the electricity of the accidental touch. Hina found her hand brushing against Eden’s accidentally—and flinched at the warmth. Minato winked at Ariel, though whether at her or the universe, no one could tell. Eden’s eyes lingered on Ariel longer than he meant to, while Hina’s thoughts bounced helplessly between him and Minato.

By the end of the night, Ariel sighed, the scent of fireworks and street food lingering in her hair. She knew one thing for certain: she had fallen for Eden.

Eden had fallen for Hina. Hina had fallen for Minato. Minato had fallen for Ariel.

And yet… somewhere in the background, the unspoken truth remained: Eden also thought about Ariel, Hina couldn’t stop noticing Eden, Minato’s heart secretly leaned toward Hina, and Ariel’s pulse betrayed her every time Minato smiled.

It was messy. It was chaotic. It was utterly, beautifully complicated.

And in the midst of fireworks, teasing, roasting, and laughter, the love square had officially ignited.

Chapter 4: Post-Festival Cleanup Chaos

The classroom looked like a rainbow-colored tornado had exploded. Confetti stuck to desks, syrup dripped from chairs, and balloons dangled from the ceiling as if protesting their own captivity. The Class of 2030 gathered for the post-Festival cleanup, though “gathered” was a very loose term.

Ariel Tanaka Ren stepped carefully over a mountain of confetti, broom in hand, determined to actually clean for once. Minato Yamamoto Hikaru, however, had other ideas.

“Need a hand?” he asked, appearing at her side with a mop held like a sword. His grin was infuriatingly casual.

“I… I think I’m fine,” Ariel said, brushing past him—but Minato wasn’t having it. Every time she bent down, he “accidentally” nudged her shoulder, or bumped against her with exaggerated clumsiness. The rest of the class watched, trying not to laugh.

From across the room, Eden Sato Akari moved with surgical precision, stacking chairs and gathering scattered papers. Ariel’s attention kept drifting toward him. When she bent down to pick up a notebook, their fingers brushed ever so slightly. Eden’s eyes flicked toward her, just long enough to notice, and the faintest smile tugged at his lips.

Nearby, Hina Watanabe Yūki wrestled with a balloon caught in the ceiling fan. Minato appeared “by coincidence,” reaching for it, and their hands touched. Hina’s cheeks flared red, and she flailed slightly, earning a snicker from Maya Fujimoto. Eden, noticing Hina’s flushed face and Minato’s smirk, subtly straightened his posture, pretending not to care, though he couldn’t take his eyes off Ariel laughing at Minato’s antics.

Maya whispered to her friends, pointing at the four mains, “Look at them. Ariel and Eden… hand touches. Hina and Minato… OMG, it’s like a soap opera in real life. And everyone’s noticing.”

Riku Tanaka grinned. “Seriously. Eden is too calm, but he notices everything Hina does. She drops a paper? He’s right there. She struggles with a balloon? He’s guiding her hands like a pro. And Hina? Totally aware of it. Red face every time. Classic.”

The rest of the class dove into chaos. Riku turned broom-cleaning into a full-on race, knocking over bins and sending glitter flying. Keiko Moriyama tried to enforce a color-coded cleanup schedule, only to be thwarted by Minato tripping over a mop and Ariel rushing in to catch him—then bumping straight into Eden.

Sora Ishikawa flicked confetti at random, causing screams, squeals, and laughter. Maya captured every moment with dramatic commentary: “Ariel laughing at Minato! Eden fixing

Hina's papers! Hina glaring at Minato! I can't even—this is gold."

Ariel tripped over a balloon while chasing a runaway paper. Minato swooped in, bumping her shoulder "accidentally" again, and she stumbled right into Eden's waiting hands. Her cheeks flamed, and Eden's eyes softened ever so slightly.

Hina struggled with another balloon when Eden calmly stepped over, steadying it. "Here," he said softly, guiding her hands. Hina's chest tightened, but she tried to act nonchalant while stealing glances at Minato, who was in the middle of a dramatic "rescue" involving three trash bags and a broom.

Minato, as always, created mini disasters with every step: tripping into buckets, slipping on syrup, knocking over confetti mountains. Ariel was repeatedly dragged into his chaos, which always ended with them laughing, tangled in each other's arms for balance.

The class watched, whispered, and giggled at the unfolding love square tension:

Minato constantly bumping into Ariel, drawing her into his chaotic orbit.

Ariel brushing hands, laughing, and lingering near Eden, her gaze occasionally catching his calm, attentive eyes.

Eden helping Hina, adjusting her hands, rescuing her from chaos, and noticing every tiny reaction she made.

Hina sneaking glances at Minato, her heart racing at his dramatic antics, even while Eden was nearby.

Every accidental touch, every bump, every shared laugh became a tiny romantic moment. Even the other students couldn't miss it. Whispers and giggles spread like wildfire:

"Ariel keeps finding ways near Eden!"

"Minato is literally everywhere Ariel goes!"

"Hina is staring at him again… I swear!"

"Eden notices everything Hina does. Look at her face!"

By the time the last broom was hung and the final trash bag tied, the classroom was sticky, tired, and full of laughter. And yet, amid all the chaos, the love square had grown tangled, messy, and undeniably alive.

Ariel flopped onto a desk, cheeks warm. Minato plopped beside her, bumping shoulders casually. Eden and Hina quietly finished the last of the papers nearby, exchanging fleeting smiles and accidental touches.

The Festival cleanup had been a disaster, hilarious, exhausting, and full of tiny sparks between four hearts pulling in every direction. The Class of 2030 had witnessed it all, and everyone knew one thing for certain: the ultimate love square was alive—and there was no untangling it anytime soon.

Chapter 5 – The Day That Feels Too Normal

The morning sun spilled lazily through the classroom windows, making the dust motes float like tiny stars in the air. The hum of chatter filled the room, papers rustling, chairs screeching as everyone settled in. It should've been an ordinary day—lectures, notes, yawns. But nothing felt ordinary anymore, not with the square of glances looping endlessly between Minato, Ariel, Eden, and Hina.

Minato sat near the back, chin resting in his hand, pretending to be interested in the chalkboard. But every few seconds, his eyes slid sideways toward Ariel. He had a way of making it look casual, as though he wasn't watching her tug a strand of hair behind her ear or doodle absentmindedly in her notebook. Of course, Ariel noticed. And she wasn't looking back at him. Her gaze stretched diagonally across the room—straight to Eden.

Eden, quiet as ever, scribbled notes neatly, eyes fixed on the board. But he wasn't as calm as he seemed. His peripheral vision was sharper than anyone else's. Every time Hina shifted in her seat—tucking her skirt, adjusting her pen, leaning down to pick something up—he noticed. He told himself he wasn't watching, yet he always did. His pencil tapped once, softly, whenever she brushed her hair behind her ear.

And Hina? She was trying her best to follow the lecture, except the back of her neck burned. She could feel Minato's gaze sweep over her when she raised her hand to answer a question. She stole quick glances, only to see him smirk or tilt his head, as if daring her to look back longer. She always broke first, biting her lip and facing the board again.

The cycle continued like a silent clock ticking beneath the teacher's voice. Minato → Ariel → Eden → Hina → Minato. Round and round.

By midmorning, whispers stirred.
"Did you see that?" one girl nudged her friend when Ariel dropped her pen and Eden immediately bent down at the same time to pick it up, their hands almost touching.
"Minato's glaring again," another hissed.
"No, he's not glaring, he's—wait, oh my god, he is."
And somewhere in the corner, two boys bet on who would crack first.

Even lunch didn't save them. The cafeteria was loud, plates clattering, chairs screeching. Ariel sat across from Eden, pretending it was casual. She asked him about homework, her fork twirling idly, but her eyes lingered too long. Minato sat diagonally from her, stabbing his food with far too much force. Hina, caught between the chaos, tried to smile at a friend's joke, only for Eden's gaze to land on her when she laughed. Minato caught that too. And Ariel caught Minato catching it. It was like watching dominos fall endlessly with no one daring to stop them.

Even cleanup duty at the end of the day wasn't safe. Ariel reached for the broom, but Minato grabbed it first, grinning like a challenge. She rolled her eyes, took the mop instead, and somehow managed to splash water near Eden's shoes. Eden didn't complain, just moved quietly to wipe it up. Hina joined him with a cloth, and for a brief, fragile moment their hands brushed. Eden's calm eyes flickered—just once. Minato saw. Ariel saw. The tension was unbearable, even in the scent of detergent and the scrape of chairs being stacked.

By the time the final bell rang, everyone pretended to stretch or pack slowly, just to watch. No one wanted to miss the tiniest moment. The love square wasn't a rumor anymore—it was a performance, happening every day, stitched into the smallest routines.

And still, none of them said a word.

Chapter 6 – The New Friend from Class 1-B

The school day started like any other: sunlight pouring through the tall windows, chatter spilling across the hallways, and the faint smell of chalk dust already settling in classrooms. But something unusual was about to shake up Class 1-A.

Mr. Haruto, the homeroom teacher, clapped his hands at the front of the room.
“Alright, listen up everyone! Today we’ll have a temporary transfer from Class 1-B joining us for a few weeks. Be nice to him.”

The door slid open with a long creak. A boy stepped in—tall, with messy dark-brown hair that couldn’t decide whether to spike up or flop down, sharp hazel eyes, and a grin that screamed mischief. He slung his bag over one shoulder and bowed in a half-hearted but playful way.

“Yo. I’m Ruka Tachibana. I don’t bite… unless you steal my lunch.”

The class burst into laughter. Even the usually composed Eden smirked. Ariel snorted out loud, Minato groaned like the joke physically hurt him, and Hina tried to hide her giggle behind her notebook.

Mr. Haruto sighed deeply. “This one’s trouble already… Alright, sit wherever you like.”

Ruka strolled to the middle row, plopping down beside Ariel. Within seconds, it was as if they had known each other for years.

By lunchtime, Ariel and Ruka had already declared themselves partners in crime.

“Wait, you’re telling me you once climbed the gym roof just to hang a banner upside down?” Ariel asked, eyes sparkling.

Ruka smirked. “Of course. It said ‘Welcome Sports Day,’ but flipped it read ‘yaD stroP emocleW.’”

Ariel burst into such loud laughter that half the cafeteria turned to look. Minato dropped his chopsticks in horror.
“Are you serious? You two together are going to blow up the school.”

And sure enough, five minutes later, Ruka and Ariel attempted to balance three trays of curry on one chair to “save space.” The chair toppled, curry splattered everywhere, and the lunch

staff shouted at them.

Instead of being embarrassed, Ariel and Ruka just high-fived.
“Best teamwork!” Ruka declared proudly.

Minato buried his face in his hands. “This is my life now…”

Later, while the classroom quieted down, Eden sat by the window, calmly reading. Ruka wandered over and leaned against his desk.

“What’re you reading?” he asked.

“A book on world history,” Eden replied without looking up.

Ruka tilted his head. “You actually like that boring stuff?”

“It’s not boring if you pay attention,” Eden said smoothly. Then, finally glancing at him, he added, “You’re interested, aren’t you?”

Caught off guard, Ruka laughed. “Okay, you got me. Yeah, I don’t read much, but the way you explained it sounded cool. Mind teaching me sometime?”

Eden’s lips curved into a small, rare smile. “Sure.”

That tiny exchange caught Hina’s attention. She whispered to Minato, wide-eyed,
“Did you see that? Eden actually smiled first!”

Minato’s jaw nearly hit the desk. “Ruka’s some kind of wizard…”

In art class, Hina struggled with shading her sketch. Ruka, sitting nearby, leaned closer.
“Try pressing lighter here,” he said, gently guiding her hand. “It’ll make the petals look softer.”

Hina blinked in surprise. “You… you draw?”

Ruka shrugged. “Sometimes. My mom’s an artist, so I picked up a few tricks.”

Hina’s eyes softened. It wasn’t often someone outside their little circle noticed her like this. Across the room, Ariel raised her eyebrows knowingly, while Minato’s pencil snapped in half.

At first, Minato wanted nothing to do with Ruka. He didn't trust his chaotic energy, especially after the curry disaster. But Ruka refused to be ignored.

"Hey, Mr. Responsible," Ruka teased one afternoon, "help me with math. I suck at it."

Minato frowned. "You should've paid attention in class."

"Yeah, yeah—but you're smart. You'll explain it better."

Grumbling, Minato worked through the problems with him. Ruka listened more carefully than expected, nodding along. When they finished, Ruka leaned back with a grin.
"Wow. You actually make this sound easy. Thanks, man."

Minato blinked. "…No problem."

Later that night, he caught himself smiling at the memory and muttered under his breath, "Damn it… he's growing on me."

By the end of the week, Class 1-A had a new obsession: Ruka's effect on the love square.

"Did you see how he sat next to Ariel again?"
"No, no—he helped Hina in art. They looked close!"
"Wait, but Eden actually talks more now. Is Ruka his real best friend?"
"And Minato! They laughed together at math! What's happening?!"

The gossip buzzed louder every day. Mr. Haruto, meanwhile, looked like he was aging a year each morning.
"Why does it feel like I'm teaching a circus…?" he muttered, watching Ariel and Ruka reenact a dramatic swordfight with rulers in the back of class.

By the time the week ended, it wasn't just four anymore. It was five.

That evening, the group walked home together under the orange glow of the setting sun. Ariel and Ruka were still laughing about their curry disaster. Eden trailed beside them quietly, though the corner of his lips twitched at their banter. Hina walked close by, occasionally glancing at Ruka's animated gestures. Minato trudged along behind them, muttering complaints that fooled no one.

"Face it," Ruka declared, throwing an arm over Ariel and Eden's shoulders, "I'm everyone's favorite now."

"Not mine," Minato muttered instantly.

"You like me deep down," Ruka shot back with a grin.

“…Maybe,” Minato admitted reluctantly, rolling his eyes.

Hina smiled softly, watching the five of them together. The group had never felt so alive, so balanced, so… unstoppable.

The love square was already a mess. But with Ruka in the mix, their youth had just gotten even more chaotic—and a whole lot brighter.

Chapter 7 – Sports Day Chaos

The morning sun glared over the Nexas College sports field, making the freshly painted track sparkle like it had been polished just for this day. Class 1-A and 1-B had paired up for the annual Sports Day, and the energy was thick with laughter, mischief, and just a touch of anxiety.

Ariel sat on the grass, stretching her legs, ponytail swaying lazily. “Why do they always make us do these races? It’s basically a trap,” she muttered, glancing at Minato tying his shoelaces with theatrical precision.

“Trap?” Minato snorted, smirking. “It’s called testing your limits. But I guess some people just weren’t born for glory,” he teased, tossing her a wink that made Ariel roll her eyes.

Across the field, Eden observed quietly, hands folded behind his back. Hina fussed over her braid, muttering under her breath whenever a strand escaped. Every so often, Eden’s gaze flicked toward her, noting the smallest movements—the way she tugged her sleeve, the way she adjusted her hair, the slight flare of her nostrils when she was frustrated. Hina, for her part, didn’t notice at first, but a blush spread across her cheeks when their eyes met.

Ruka, leaning lazily against the goalpost with sunglasses perched on his nose, was already smirking at the chaos unfolding. Somehow, he managed to appear in the perfect spot to stir trouble, cheer on disaster, and prevent outright catastrophe, all at the same time. He was invisible to most, but the glue holding this group together.

“Alright, everyone!” the student council president shouted, clipboard raised. “Team relay! Class 1-A and 1-B, pair up however you like!”

Without missing a beat, Ariel and Minato paired, Eden and Hina were left with each other, and Ruka sidled up next to Ariel, whispering with a grin, “If you trip over Minato, I’ll catch you. Or… maybe I’ll just laugh.”

Ariel giggled. “Thanks… I think.”

Minato, hearing the exchange, groaned. “Do you have to charm everyone, Ruka?”

“I’m not charming. I’m helpful… and a little dangerous,” Ruka replied, tossing a wink.

The whistle blew. Chaos erupted. Ariel sprinted like a bolt of lightning—but Minato ran straight into her, sending both of them tumbling in a spectacular heap. The spectators from Class 1-B gasped, but Ruka had already dashed forward, shouting, “You got this, team!”

Eden and Hina moved in a synchronized rhythm, his calm focus balancing her dramatic flair. Every time she stumbled slightly, his hand brushed against hers, steadying her. Hina felt her

heart skip—a little. Eden's gaze remained calm, but there was an intensity in his eyes she couldn't quite explain.

Meanwhile, Ariel and Minato's chaos had escalated: Minato tripped over Ariel, she tripped over his fallen shoe, and both collided into a stack of cones, sending them scattering across the field. Ruka dove in, managing to catch one of the cones midair, grinning wildly. "And that, ladies and gentlemen, is how you turn disaster into a highlight reel!"

Across the sidelines, gossip spread like wildfire.
"Did you see Ruka helping Ariel again?"
"And Hina and Eden… their hands almost touched!"
"Minato looks like he wants to murder someone… probably Ruka."
The students from 1-B whispered gleefully. "This is more entertaining than the race itself."

By mid-morning, things got even worse. The water balloon toss, meant to be friendly, turned into an all-out war. Minato was soaked from head to toe, cursing while Ariel laughed hysterically. Hina had managed to get a balloon squarely on Eden's shoulder, and he just blinked at her with calm amusement, dripping water and all. Ruka, of course, was sneaking behind the chaos, tossing harmless balloons in the perfect spot to make everyone slip or collide, secretly orchestrating the fun.

"Ruka!" Ariel shouted through laughter. "You're evil!"

Ruka shrugged, grinning from ear to ear. "I prefer entertaining."

By the end of the day, everyone was exhausted, dripping, and laughing uncontrollably. The five of them walked home together, covered in grass stains, water spots, and traces of sunscreen. Ariel leaned on Ruka, still giggling. Hina walked next to Eden, silently glowing from the day's small touches and near-collisions. Minato followed closely behind, muttering complaints that everyone ignored.

Ruka stretched his arms over Ariel and Eden's shoulders. "See? I'm officially everyone's favorite."

"Not mine," Minato grumbled.

"You like me deep down," Ruka teased.

"…Maybe," Minato admitted, shaking his head, secretly smiling.

Hina quietly laughed, watching the whole scene. The love square had become a chaotic, tangled mess—but with Ruka now firmly in the middle, their youth was more vibrant, more alive, and infinitely more unpredictable.

Even as the sun dipped below the horizon, painting the sky orange and pink, the five of them knew one thing for certain: this was just the beginning of a very, very messy, very fun, very unforgettable year.

Chapter 8 – Why I Am Stuck in This Ultimate Love Square?!

Ruka had come to school expecting a normal day—maybe some quiet cleaning, maybe some studying—but fate had clearly decided to ignore his plans. As he walked toward the gym, he remembered he had to help with the morning cleanup. When he opened the door, Ariel was already there, sweeping the floor with such dramatic flair it could have won an award for “Most Theatrical Gym Cleaning of the Year.”

Ruka wrestled with the mop, trying not to trip over the bucket. Every time he stepped forward, it seemed determined to launch itself into the air like it was auditioning for an action movie.

Ariel, brushing imaginary dust from the air with her broom, leaned toward him, voice almost swallowed by the echoing gym. “Ruka… can I tell you something… personal?”

Ruka, trying to look relaxed while secretly feeling like his heart was auditioning for a drum solo, nodded. “Of course! I’m basically a feelings sponge… only much cooler, obviously.”

Ariel’s cheeks pinkened, and she twisted the broom handle nervously. “I… I really like Eden. I… I love him.”

Ruka froze mid-mop. The water in the bucket sloshed dangerously toward his shoes.

WHAT?! EDEN?! Calm, perfect, Mr.-Everything-is-Fine Eden?! My life is officially a rom-com disaster, he thought, imagining the scene in slow motion.

“Uh… wow… amazing… noted… love… Eden… totally got it…” he managed to say, forcing a smile that probably looked like he was auditioning for a horror movie instead of a normal reaction.

Ariel tilted her head, eyebrows raised. “You’re… calm.”

Ruka’s internal monologue screamed, Calm?! My sanity just RSVP’d “no” to this confession hurricane! My brain is melting into the gym floor right now! He nodded at her, too terrified to make eye contact with the mop that had become his unwilling witness.

By the time Ariel returned to her sweeping, Ruka was leaning on the mop, pretending to examine the floor for dust while internally screaming, I need air, chocolate, a time machine… anything!

By afternoon, Ruka decided he needed to escape the lingering echoes of Ariel's confession. He headed to the rooftop, hoping for a quiet moment of peace and maybe a small mental reset. Of course, the universe had other plans.

Minato was already there, leaning against the railing with that usual "I'm serious, but also annoyingly perfect" expression. Ruka's stomach immediately recognized this wasn't going to be a peaceful session.

"Ruka… I want to tell you something," Minato began, voice softening in a way that made Ruka's knees wobble. "I… I love Ariel. I really love her."

Ruka froze mid-step. Ariel loves Eden… and now Minato loves Ariel?! My heart might literally explode into a confetti of panic!

"Uh… wow… amazing… yes… totally… love… Ariel… noted…" Ruka said, teeth gritted and voice cracking slightly.

Minato smirked, tilting his head. "You're weirdly calm. You sure you're okay?"

Ruka forced a chuckle, tripping slightly over the edge of a bench. "Totally fine… just… rooftop vibes… absorbing… love… feelings…"

Internally, he screamed: Calm? One more confession and my sanity files for emergency leave! Send backup! Or at least a chocolate bar!

By evening, Ruka thought perhaps the library could offer some semblance of quiet. He tiptoed in, hoping for peace, only to find Hina hunched over her sketchbook with that familiar furrowed brow of concentration.

She glanced up, voice soft, almost a whisper, like she was sharing state secrets. "Ruka… I… I love Minato."

Ruka flailed internally. Books toppled around him as if the library itself recognized the chaos.

Hina too?! Okay… officially a love triangle… maybe the library needs a warning sign… My brain is fried…

"Uh… wow… amazing… yes… totally… love… Minato… noted…" he stammered, picking up the fallen books while trying to appear collected.

Hina raised an eyebrow. "You're acting strange… okay?"

Ruka forced a nod, muttering, "Totally fine… cataloging… love… yep… nothing to see here."

Under his breath, he muttered: Love triangle? Manageable… Right? …Right?!

Finally, dinner. Ruka thought he could finally breathe, sit quietly, maybe eat something edible without emotional bombshells. Eden, calm as a still lake, sat across from him. Knife and fork perfectly aligned.

“Ruka… I… I love Hina,” Eden said, almost casually, as if he were announcing the weather.

Ruka’s fork clattered to the plate. NO! EDEN TOO?! ENOUGH! Eden too?! THE CALM ONE?! My brain is officially on fire! Now it’s… wait… a LOVE SQUARE?! I did NOT sign up for this madness!

“Uh… wow… amazing… love square… noted… absorbing… dinner… yep…” Ruka stammered, trying to sound casual while internally performing a full Broadway panic number.

Eden raised an eyebrow, calm as ever. “You’re… panicking. Aren’t you supposed to be calm?”

Ruka threw his hands up dramatically, muttering to himself: Calm?! My brain is hosting four confessions at once! CALM IS DEAD! Someone call a therapist, or maybe a referee manual for hearts!

He collapsed into his chair, imagining ghostly versions of Ariel, Minato, and Hina spinning around him with hearts for eyes, while Eden simply sat there, serene, like a master conductor of chaos.

By the time Ruka reached home, night had already swallowed the city. He collapsed onto his bed, hugging his pillow like a life raft. His mind replayed the day’s confessions in a relentless loop:

Ariel → Eden

Minato → Ariel

Hina → Minato

Eden → Hina

Ruka yelped dramatically, throwing his arms into the air. “THIS IS INSANE! WHY AM I STUCK IN THIS… ULTIMATE LOVE SQUARE?! I DIDN’T SIGN UP FOR THIS!”

He flopped sideways, imagining the four of them spinning around him in slow motion, each shouting their love while he scribbled frantic notes like a referee juggling four flaming torches.

“I just wanted a normal day… maybe chocolate… maybe a nap… maybe a referee manual for hearts… anything but this madness…” he muttered, hugging the pillow again.

“Love triangle? Over. Love square? Check. Ultimate love square? Oh… I’m officially trapped… and my sanity has filed a formal complaint.”

Ruka realized, with a mix of horror and reluctant awe, that tomorrow would only bring more chaos, more confessions, more comedic heartbreaks—and he would remain the unwilling, hilariously overwhelmed keeper of the ultimate love square.

Chapter 9 – The Study Session That Solved Nothing (But Caused Everything)

The library smelled like old books, pencils, and the faint hint of someone's leftover instant noodles. Four students—Ariel, Minato, Hina, and Eden—sat at a table that looked more like a small disaster zone than a study area. Stacks of textbooks teetered precariously, pens rolled like runaway marbles, and a half-eaten chocolate bar balanced on Ariel's physics notebook like a ticking time bomb.

Ariel stared at her physics problem like it had personally offended her. "I swear, gravity hates me. This feather problem… it's plotting against me!"

Minato, leaning back in his chair with feet on the table, smirked. "Maybe the feather knows you're going to fail and is… uh… motivating itself?"

Ariel's eyes narrowed. "You're impossible."

Hina, quietly sketching a tiny Minato falling off a chair, snickered. "Impossible is one word. Entertaining is another."

Eden, calm as a monk, adjusted his glasses. "If we actually studied instead of bickering, we might—"

Before he could finish, Ariel flailed, sending her pencil flying. It landed smack in Eden's notebook.

Eden's eyes widened slightly, then he calmly nudged it back to her. "Precision, Ariel. Precision is key."

Ariel groaned. "You're ruining my chaos!"

Minato leaned over and grabbed the chocolate bar off Ariel's notebook, pretending to eat it. "Actually, I think I just improved your chaos."

Ariel leapt up like a cat on fire. "MINATO! That was mine!"

Hina stifled a laugh, but as she reached for her sketchbook, her elbow knocked over a cup of water. It tipped perfectly onto Ariel's notebook, smearing equations and doodles alike.

Ariel shrieked. “MY NOTES! MINATO! HINA!”

Minato, trying to grab a pen to salvage the situation, accidentally sent a stack of pencils flying. One hit Hina’s shoulder, causing her to yelp.

Eden sighed, closing his notebook like a protective shield. “I… I give up.”

From the corner of the library, Ruka peeked over his book, eyes wide. I thought this was a study session. I thought they were studying. Instead… it’s a full-blown slapstick performance with textbooks.

Ariel, not done yet, grabbed a chocolate cookie from her bag in frustration, intending to take a bite. Minato, sensing opportunity, flicked it toward her like a ninja star.

The cookie hit Ariel in the forehead. She paused, stunned, chocolate smeared across her hair. “MINATO!”

Minato pretended to be shocked. “I… I think it was the gravity again. No idea how it got there.”

Hina, laughing so hard she snorted, accidentally flung her pencil case across the table. It hit Eden’s arm, knocking his pen into his water cup.

Eden, calm but deadly serious: “I’m going to lose my mind. This is… unacceptable.”

Ariel, determined to retaliate, picked up a small eraser and tossed it at Minato. He ducked—but the eraser ricocheted off the table and landed squarely on Hina’s sketchbook.

Hina: “Hey!”

Eden pinched the bridge of his nose. “I… I need a moment of silence.”

Ruka, now crouched behind a bookshelf for safety, muttered under his breath: I thought chaos was manageable. I was wrong. I am witnessing the ultimate textbook apocalypse.

The noise attracted a few curious classmates. One peeked in and saw pencils flying, water spilling, chocolate smeared, and four students laughing, groaning, and dramatically flailing.

Classmate whispered: “Are they… studying?”
Another shrugged: “I… don’t think so.”

Meanwhile, Ariel tried to salvage her ruined notes, only to knock over Minato’s math book, which toppled into Eden’s history stack. Books cascaded like dominoes across the table.

Eden blinked once, then muttered under his breath: “This… is a nightmare.”

Minato, seizing the moment, picked up a stray chocolate chip from the floor and flicked it at Ariel. She retaliated with a pencil. Hina joined in with a crumpled paper ball. Eden quietly defended himself with a ruler.

The four of them ended up in a ridiculous, slow-motion “food and stationery war,” the library echoing with laughter, shouts, and paper flying everywhere.

Ruka covered his face with his hands, muttering: I… I am the designated witness. This is my life now. Chaos has a name: it is Ariel, Minato, Hina, and Eden.

By the end of the session, the table was completely destroyed: notebooks soaked, pencils everywhere, and chocolate smeared on half the textbooks. And yet… somehow, they were all laughing. Ariel wiped tears of laughter from her eyes. Minato was smug. Hina was grinning like a mischievous fox. Eden, surprisingly, let out a small chuckle.

Ruka exhaled slowly, standing up. Study session solved nothing… but it caused everything. He gave one last glance at the four chaos incarnate and muttered: “I… survive another day… barely.”

Chapter 10 – Group Chat Explodes

Ruka had always thought that group chats were harmless. Innocent, even. But today, Class 1-A's "Study & Chill" chat was about to prove him wrong.

It started innocently enough. Ariel had posted a photo of her half-destroyed physics notes from the library disaster.

Ariel: "Guys… look at my notes. RIP. Who knew studying could be lethal?"

Within seconds, Minato responded.

Minato: "RIP? More like war crime. Also, I demand compensation in chocolate form."

Hina chimed in, her message carefully edited with emojis:

Hina: "😂 I can't… this is a disaster. And yes, chocolate is non-negotiable."

Eden, as always, kept his tone unnervingly calm, though Ruka could practically hear the tiny exclamation mark behind his text.

Eden: "If you had organized your materials properly, none of this would have happened."

Ariel immediately fired back.

Ariel: "Excuse me, Mister Perfect, maybe YOU shouldn't have spilled your water on my notes. FACTS."

Minato: "Guys… we are missing the point. The real crime is Hina's paper airplanes hitting me in the forehead."

Hina: "Hey! That was defensive maneuvers. You attacked my sketchbook first!"

The chat began to spiral. Ruka watched silently from his phone in the corner, peeking over at them as they all stared at their screens like battle generals. I… I am not involved… yet. My brain is trembling.

Then, Ariel sent a meme of a cat wearing glasses, captioned: "Studying with these guys be like…"

Minato, never one to lose, replied with a gif of a dinosaur throwing pencils.

Hina responded with an edited photo of Eden holding a ruler like a samurai sword.

Eden: "I am unfazed by your childish displays."

Ariel: “Unfazed? You literally had chocolate on your sleeve and didn’t notice.”

Minato: “You mean the chocolate I strategically left there to taunt you?”

Hina: “Strategically or not… ew, chocolate on your sleeve is gross.”

Eden: “…I will shower after this conversation.”

The chat notifications pinged nonstop. Every 10 seconds, a new emoji, meme, or snarky remark exploded on the screen. Ruka scrolled rapidly, internally screaming.

This is chaos. Digital chaos. And it’s worse than the library. They are all at DEFCON 1 of nonsense.

Then came the “accidental confession chain.” Ariel sent a crying-laughing emoji to Minato’s “chocolate strategy” comment, and Minato replied with a heart.

Hina: “MINATO!”
Ariel: “Oops?”
Eden: “…this is highly irregular.”

Ruka’s internal monologue: Irregular? This is full-on emotional warfare.

Ruka tried to breathe calmly. Focus. Observe. Do not intervene. Do not… oh no.

Ariel sent a typo-filled message meant for Hina but accidentally sent it to the group:

Ariel: “I can’t believe you make me laugh all the time <3”

Immediately, Minato replied:

Minato: “Who are you talking about <3 ?”

Hina: “HEY!”

Eden: “…I see. This… this is why humans are complicated.”

The emojis escalated to full-blown war: crying faces, laughing faces, heart eyes, and even the occasional banana thrown in for no reason at all.

Ruka, hiding behind his phone, muttered: I thought four confessions were enough chaos for one day… now their group chat is creating a black hole of ridiculousness.

By the end of the night, the chat notifications had reached triple digits. Ariel, Minato, Hina, and Eden were all replying simultaneously. Every time Ruka glanced up, their eyes were glued to the screen, fingers flying over keyboards, occasionally shouting at each other.

Ruka sighed, lying on the couch, phone clutched like a lifeline.

This. This is the digital apocalypse. And I'm just the unwilling witness.

He typed one message to himself in the notes app:

"Note to self: Never underestimate the explosive power of four teenagers, a group chat, and one slightly melted chocolate bar. Survival rate: 0%."

And just as Ruka set his phone down… another ping. The group chat had exploded again.

Tomorrow, chaos would continue. I will survive… somehow… maybe…

Chapter 11 – Two Dates, One Saturday

The sun hung lazily in the sky, casting golden warmth over the city as if it knew this Saturday was going to be… unusual.

Hina clutched her bag like it was a lifeline, heart pounding. She had insisted on meeting Minato at the park at 10 a.m., telling herself it was “just a casual hangout.” Her brain, however, refused to cooperate. Just a casual hangout? Right… like my heart hasn’t been waiting for this moment forever!

Meanwhile, Minato strolled casually along the sidewalk, earbuds in, sipping iced tea. Just another Saturday. Why is Hina acting like she’s walking the red carpet? he thought, blissfully unaware of the whirlwind of emotions trailing behind her.

They met near the fountain, and Hina’s legs nearly gave out at the sight of him. Minato smiled politely. “Hey, Hina. Ready?”

Hina’s brain melted. “Y-Yeah… totally… ready!”

Inside, she was squealing, bouncing from excitement, imagining confetti falling from the sky, violins playing… basically a full-blown romantic movie in her head. Meanwhile, Minato looked at the fountain and yawned slightly.

They walked side by side, Minato casually tossing a pebble into the water.

Hina (thinking): He’s so close… I can smell his shampoo… does he know how much my heart is racing?

Minato (thinking): Okay, this is nice. She’s quiet today. Peaceful. Just… hanging out.

Hina tried to start a conversation, her words coming out in a flustered jumble. “S-So… um… do you… like water fountains?”

Minato tilted his head. “Huh? Water fountains? Yeah… they’re fine.”

Hina internally screamed. FINE? FINE?! THE WATER IS MAGICAL, THE FOUNTAIN IS OUR DESTINY AND HE SAYS FINE?!

Despite her inner meltdown, they managed to walk to a small café nearby. Hina kept fiddling with her napkin, heart racing every time Minato laughed at something mundane the barista said. Minato sipped his coffee, scrolling his phone, completely normal, completely unaware of the romantic storm beside him.

Across town, Ariel and Eden had arranged to meet at a small art gallery, ostensibly to “check out the new exhibits.” Ariel’s brain, however, had been preparing for this day for weeks.

She arrived early, wearing a light pink scarf that she had debated over in front of her mirror for an hour. Eden arrived precisely on time, calm as ever, hands in pockets.

Ariel (internally): This is it. My life. My ultimate date. I can’t… breathe… oh wait, breathe. Smile. Smile naturally. Don’t scream.

Eden (thinking): I hope she likes abstract art… or maybe I’ll just comment on the lighting…

Ariel practically grabbed his arm the moment he walked in. “Eden! Over here!”

Eden blinked. “Uh… hello. What’s the emergency?”

Ariel’s cheeks burned. “Nothing! Just… excited to see you.”

Eden raised an eyebrow but didn’t comment, as if seeing her excited was… normal. To him, it was a casual hangout. To her, it was cinematic, romantic, and life-altering all at once.

They wandered through the gallery. Ariel kept pointing at paintings, whispering dramatic interpretations. “Look at this one! It’s like… my heart, but… in colors!”

Eden nodded politely. “Yes… colorful.”

Ariel internally yelled. COLORFUL?! He doesn’t get it! But he’s here… with me… my heart… okay, breathe.

Then came the inevitable flirty accident. Ariel tried to point at a painting, accidentally bumping into Eden. Their hands brushed. Ariel gasped. Eden blinked, slightly startled. Ariel’s mind: OMG. Did our souls just touch? Eden’s mind: Ah. Hand bumped. Minimal pain. Noted.

Ariel flailed slightly. “S-Sorry! I-I didn’t mean… your hand… oh my gosh…”

Eden chuckled softly, the first real smile of the day. “It’s okay, really. Accidents happen.”

Meanwhile, at the park, Hina and Minato had gotten ice cream. Hina’s scoop wobbled dangerously on the cone.

Hina: “I-I got chocolate… no, vanilla? Ugh!”

Minato, distracted by a dog chasing its owner, grabbed the cone to stabilize it. “Here, hold it steady.”

Their fingers brushed. Hina’s heart stopped. Minato sighed. “Relax. It’s just ice cream.”

Hina internally screamed: Just ice cream? JUST ICE CREAM? It's my entire life!

Minato laughed at her flailing. "You're… dramatic today."

Hina: "I… uh… maybe…"

Minato shook his head, smiling faintly. Still can't believe she's this… something.

By mid-afternoon, both pairs ended up at a small amusement park, coincidentally. Ariel dragged Eden onto a ferris wheel. Hina begged Minato to ride the carousel with her.

On the ferris wheel, Ariel clung slightly to Eden's arm. "Eden… isn't this romantic?"

Eden: "It's… tall. The view is nice."

Ariel internally screamed: TALL? VIEW? HE'S IGNORING MY FEELINGS! But he's here… with me…

Minato and Hina spun slowly on the carousel. Hina's skirt twirled. She squealed every time the horse dipped. Minato simply held onto the bar, hands steady, smile faint, glancing at her with mild amusement.

Hina: "This… is… amazing… the best day ever!"

Minato: "Glad you're enjoying it."

Hina internally: ENJOYING IT? He's holding my hand! My heart! I can't…

Meanwhile, Ariel accidentally flung a cotton candy at Eden, who caught it midair with one hand.

Eden: "You threw this at me."

Ariel: "No! I mean… yes! But… it's cute! Right?"

Eden blinked. "It's… sticky."

Ariel internally fainted.

As the sun set, all four met near the exit, laughing and flustered, candy and ice cream stains on shirts, carousel music still echoing in the air.

Hina: “I… had the best time. Ever.”

Minato: “Yeah… it was… nice.”

Ariel: “This… this was amazing… I loved it.”

Eden: “It was… fine.”

Hina internally: FINE?! He doesn’t get it. But he was there. With me. My life is complete.

Ariel internally: FINE?! He was here. He was holding my hand. I’m not dead yet. This counts as love.

Both boys, oblivious, smiled faintly at the two girls’ dramatic interpretations, while the girls melted into the experience entirely.

By the time the group parted ways, the streets glowed orange from the sunset. Both Hina and Ariel were still internally squealing, hearts racing, thinking of every tiny touch, every laugh, every shared look. Meanwhile, Minato and Eden… thought it had been a pretty normal Saturday.

Hina whispered to herself on the walk home: My life… my first real date… even if he doesn’t know it… perfect.

Ariel grinned softly: I survived a romantic explosion… and it was glorious.

And somewhere in their hearts, the subtle sparks between them all quietly grew, unnoticed by anyone but themselves.

Chapter 12 – The Truth Behind the Smile

The morning sunlight streamed through the classroom windows, painting golden stripes across the desks. The chatter of students filled the air, but the four of them—Hina, Minato, Ariel, and Eden—moved through it like their own separate orbiting planets, connected by invisible threads that neither they nor anyone else fully understood.

Hina sat by the window, tracing patterns on her notebook absentmindedly. Her smile, as always, seemed effortless, warm, and light. But beneath it, her mind was a storm of thoughts. Every glance from Minato, every laugh he gave, sent her heart stuttering. That smile? It was only the surface. Inside, she was calculating, worrying, dreaming. Does he notice? Did I act too… too much?

Across the aisle, Minato lounged in his chair, headphones draped around his neck, pretending to doodle in his notebook. His smile was easy, casual, almost lazy. But if one looked closer, they'd see the twitch in his fingers whenever Hina's gaze lingered a second too long. He didn't think he was worried or flustered. It's just… I like how she smiles. That's all. Totally casual.

Meanwhile, Ariel sat near the front, tapping her pencil rhythmically on the desk. Her smile, bright and cheerful, radiated a confidence she didn't entirely feel. Every time Eden glanced her way, her chest fluttered. Act normal. Smile. Don't let him see you're spiraling. Just… breathe…

Eden, sitting a few desks back, leaned slightly forward, propping his chin on his hand. His usual calm smile masked the way his thoughts replayed every small moment with Ariel: the touch of her hand on the ferris wheel, her laughter echoing across the park, the cotton candy incident. It's nothing. Just… pleasant. Absolutely normal.

As the morning wore on, the classroom teacher droned on about some historical figure's accomplishments, but none of the four were listening. Hina kept stealing glances at Minato, Ariel occasionally glanced at Eden, and the boys… well, they were pretending they weren't noticing.

At lunch, the cafeteria became a stage for unintended revelations. Hina accidentally dropped her sandwich on the floor. Minato's hand shot out to help, and their fingers brushed. Hina's cheeks flamed. Minato's expression remained neutral—but internally, his brain performed cartwheels.

Across the table, Ariel knocked over her drink, splashing a small puddle near Eden's tray. Eden calmly reached over and nudged it away. Ariel gasped. Did he just… not freak out? Her mind filled with tiny scenarios of romantic disaster averted.

Hina, now eating her slightly squished sandwich, caught Ariel's eyes. The two girls exchanged a look—a silent acknowledgment that, yes, their crushes were complicated, messy, and undeniably real.

Eden spoke, breaking the momentary tension. "The cafeteria food hasn't changed much."

Ariel blinked. Not freaked out. Calm. Smooth. Why is he like this?

Meanwhile, Minato smirked faintly at Hina. "You really need to stop dropping things."

Hina's smile widened, but behind it lurked a nervous tension. I can't believe he notices. He's teasing me. Does he know what it does to my heart?

Later that afternoon, the four ended up on the school terrace, ostensibly for fresh air. Hina leaned against the railing, her hair blowing slightly in the breeze. Minato leaned beside her, hands tucked casually in his pockets. Ariel perched on a nearby bench, flipping through her notebook, while Eden stood a little apart, quietly observing.

Someone tossed a stray paper ball from another class. Hina ducked instinctively, and Minato reached out to steady her. Ariel giggled at the motion, but Eden's calm smile never wavered.

Hina's inner voice screamed: Every smile. Every touch. He's… he's noticing. I can't… my heart!

Minato's inner voice: She's smiling like that again. Relax. Nothing's happening… well, maybe something. But fine.

Ariel's inner voice: He's calm. Too calm. This is dangerous. But… I like it.

Eden's inner voice: She's happy. That's enough. I don't need more explanation.

The sun dipped lower, casting long shadows across the terrace. They laughed over a silly coincidence—a bird landing on the railing just inches from them—and for a moment, all four were caught in a rare, perfect harmony. Their smiles were genuine, but behind each one was a truth only they knew: fear, hope, longing, and the complicated thrill of feelings unspoken.

Hina glanced at Minato, her smile softening. "Thanks… for… just… being here."

Minato smirked faintly. "No problem. It's… fine."

Ariel whispered to Eden, a little too quietly, "This was… fun."

Eden nodded, his calm mask perfectly in place. "It was… fine."

And yet, for both Hina and Ariel, the truth behind their smiles was more than fun—it was everything. Every heartbeat, every tiny gesture, every unspoken word.

As the sky darkened into evening, the four parted ways, carrying their smiles like shields, hiding the chaos and longing beneath. And in the quiet aftermath, only the silent streets and fluttering leaves bore witness to the truths behind their smiles.

Chapter 13 – The Incident at the Winter Dance

The gym had been transformed into a sparkling winter wonderland: strings of fairy lights crisscrossed above, a glimmering snowflake chandelier swayed slightly with the ventilation, and fake snow covered the corners of the room. The air smelled faintly of peppermint and hot cocoa. Music pulsed softly, a slow waltz giving the perfect backdrop for romance—or disaster.

Hina clutched her clutch bag nervously, adjusting her scarf and twirling her hair. Every beat of the music made her heart skip—not just because it was a dance, but because Minato was here. Her Minato. Her crush. Her everything.

Minato, looking uncharacteristically formal in his dark jacket, scanned the room casually—though his eyes kept flicking to Hina. He didn't realize how tightly Hina was gripping the edge of her sleeve, or how her heartbeat had turned into a drumline in her chest.

Across the gym, Ariel twirled elegantly, glancing toward Eden, who stood with hands behind his back, calm as ever. She tried to hide the excitement bubbling in her chest, the fluttering of her stomach whenever Eden's eyes briefly met hers. Eden, for his part, remained the picture of collected composure—yet inside, he was mentally calculating exactly how close he could stand to Hina without causing a scene… and wondering why his heart insisted on speeding up anyway.

The dance had officially begun, and the DJ called for couples to pair up. Fate, or perhaps some cruel cosmic joke, guided the group automatically: Minato extended a hand toward Ariel, Ariel raised an eyebrow but accepted, Eden gestured toward Hina, and Hina's jaw practically dropped.

Hina (internally panicking): Eden?! Wait—he… he wants to dance with me? And Minato's with Ariel?! This is… a disaster. Or a dream. Or both!

Minato (internally calculating): She's nervous. Good. I can… I can fix that. Calm, casual, just a simple dance… why is my heart doing somersaults?

Ariel (internally screaming quietly): Minato's hand is warm. Why is my brain melted already? Just… just dance normally… breathe…

Eden (internally smirking): Hina's grip is so firm. Calm. Calm. But… why does this feel like… this feels like chaos waiting to happen?

As the music swelled, the first step was attempted. Minato and Ariel started with a graceful

twirl—but Minato misjudged the spin slightly. Ariel, trying to maintain elegance, ended up bumping into Eden, who was just approaching Hina for a twirl.
Hina let out a squeak, and her scarf nearly slipped off. Eden caught her shoulder in perfect timing—but the angle sent them spinning into a table of punch cups. A red and white flurry of punch, napkins, and paper snowflakes exploded across the dance floor.

Minato stumbled backward, accidentally stepping on Ariel's dress hem. Ariel yelped, nearly tipping forward into the DJ table.

Hina (gasping, clutching Eden's arm): "Oh no! I—I'm so sorry!"

Eden (calmly, though his calm mask was cracking internally): "It's… fine. Just… maybe avoid the punch next time?"

Ariel (trying to straighten her dress, muttering): "He's calm… why is he calm?! My life is chaos!"

Minato (gritting his teeth, helping Ariel balance): "It's fine… I got you… mostly."

The music, oblivious to the chaos, swelled into the next song, and the four were now awkwardly dancing—Minato and Ariel trying to regain composure, Hina and Eden twirling gingerly to avoid knocking over another cup. Every misstep, every accidental brush of hands, sent their hearts racing faster.

Hina (internally): His hand… it's warm. He's smiling slightly. My chest… I can't!

Minato (internally): She's… laughing nervously. That laugh. That laugh is dangerous.

Ariel (internally): His shoulder… so broad… he's close… why is my face burning?

Eden (internally, quietly): She's smiling. That smile… I can't… calm. Calm, Eden.

Meanwhile, the rest of the class watched, some snickering, some whispering: "Are they… really a disaster?" "It's like… a rom-com exploded in the gym."

By the final song, the dance had become a chaotic blur of near-collisions, missteps, giggles, and frantic apologies. Yet somehow, amid spilled punch, fluttering scarves, and tangled arms, a strange harmony emerged.

Hina leaned slightly on Eden's shoulder at the very end of the dance, breathless and laughing. Eden smiled faintly, perfectly calm, but inside he felt… satisfied.

Minato adjusted Ariel's hair as she laughed at his over-enthusiastic "step correction." Ariel grinned, heart pounding, trying to act nonchalant but failing spectacularly.

The music ended. The gym erupted into applause—not for the elegant dancing, but for the sheer entertainment of watching four hearts collide spectacularly in public.

Hina (internally, breathless): I… this was perfect. I never… ever… want this to end.

Ariel (internally, blushing furiously): Why does my chest feel like it's going to explode? I… this… Eden…

Minato (internally, smirking faintly): She's laughing… I like it… more than I thought.

Eden (internally, quietly relieved): Hina's smile… yes. Worth the chaos.

And somewhere in the corner, Ruka—observing quietly—covered his eyes. His internal monologue screamed: THE ULTIMATE LOVE SQUARE. IT'S OFFICIALLY EXPLODED. AND I'M OUTNUMBERED AND HELPLESS.

Chapter 14 – Confessions of the Ultimate Love Square

The air outside was crisp and cold, the kind of winter evening that made cheeks pink and noses tingle. Snowflakes drifted lazily from the sky, settling softly on the campus paths, glittering like tiny diamonds under the streetlamps. Inside the small, quiet winter garden near the student lounge, Hina and Ariel had arranged to meet their crushes separately, unaware of the chaos the night would bring.

Hina wrapped her scarf tighter around her neck, hands trembling slightly. She watched Minato approach, his breath forming little clouds in the cold. The sight of him—tall, calm, impossibly composed—made her stomach twist. She had rehearsed this moment a thousand times, imagined the words flowing perfectly, imagined him smiling and saying yes… but the cold gnawed at her courage.

Hina (nervously, voice soft): “M-Minato… can we… talk for a minute?”

Minato tilted his head slightly, smiling faintly, unaware of the storm Hina was trying to summon. “Sure. What’s up?”

They walked slowly along the snow-dusted path. The crunch of snow under their shoes filled the awkward silence. Hina took a deep breath.

Hina (voice shaking): “I… I really like you, Minato. I… I love you.”

For a moment, the world seemed to freeze. Snow hung suspended in the air. Minato’s calm gaze softened slightly, but he didn’t smile. He opened his mouth… then closed it. He exhaled, looking down at the snow-covered ground, unsure how to break the weight of her words gently.

Minato (softly, almost apologetically): “Hina… I… I care about you. You’re… amazing, really… but I don’t feel the same way about you. I… I love Ariel.”

Hina’s breath hitched. Her hands, clutching the ends of her scarf, went cold. For a moment, she couldn’t breathe, couldn’t think, couldn’t process. The snowflakes melted on her hair like tiny tears, and her chest felt like it was being squeezed.

Hina (voice barely audible, breaking): “Y-You… love Ariel?”

Minato nodded, regret clouding his usually composed face. “I didn’t want to hurt you. You’re incredible… but my heart… it’s hers.”

Hina stumbled back, the words echoing in her mind. The rehearsed confession, the butterflies, the hope… shattered. She turned away, blinking rapidly to hold back tears, and

whispered to herself as the cold winter air stung her cheeks:

Hina (internally): I gave him everything… and it wasn't enough. How do people survive this?

Meanwhile, a few blocks away, Ariel paced in front of Eden. Snow crunched under her boots as she wrung her gloved hands. The streetlamp flickered above them, casting soft shadows on the icy pavement. She had never felt so exposed in her life.

Ariel (forcing a smile, though her chest was racing): "E-Eden… can we… talk? I… I need to tell you something."

Eden, calm as always, tilted his head slightly. "Of course, Ariel. What's on your mind?"

Ariel's voice quivered, breath forming tiny clouds in the cold air. "I… I really like you. I love you. I've liked you for a long time… and I can't hide it anymore."

Eden's face softened, but there was a weight in his eyes, a sorrowful honesty. He took a careful step closer, but not too close—he wanted to protect her heart from unnecessary pain.

Eden (gently, quietly): "Ariel… I… I care about you. You're incredible… but I don't feel the same way about you. I… I love Hina."

Ariel's eyes widened, shock and heartbreak crashing over her. Her knees felt weak. She gripped her coat tightly, unable to stop the trembling that ran through her body.

Ariel (voice barely a whisper, cracking): "H-Hina? You… you love… Hina?"

Eden nodded, his expression calm but heavy with guilt. "I didn't want to hurt you. You deserve someone who can love you back fully… but my heart… it's hers."

The snow swirled around Ariel like a cruel curtain, as if the winter itself was mourning with her. She swallowed hard, forcing back the tears that threatened to spill. Her hands shook, and for the first time in months, she felt powerless.

Ariel (internally): I gave him my heart… and he gave it to someone else. How… how can something so beautiful feel like this?

As Hina walked home with the cold gnawing at her and her heart aching like a frozen storm inside her chest, she thought about how quickly life could twist. Ariel, on her side of the city, felt the same emptiness, shivering under the streetlamps, knowing that her love had collided with an immovable wall.

Meanwhile, Ruka, safely tucked away at home, had no idea any of this had happened. If he had known, he would have screamed, fainted, and possibly written a manual on how to survive heartbreak all in one night.

Winter winds howled through the streets, as if echoing the sorrow of the two girls whose

hearts had been bravely offered—and tenderly, painfully, rejected. The Ultimate Love Square had not just tangled hearts—it had broken them, and now, all four corners of that impossible square were filled with silent longing, regret, and unspoken emotions.

Hina pressed a hand to her chest, letting the cold pierce her pain. Ariel's lips trembled as she whispered into the dark:

How do you fix a heart that gave itself completely… to someone else?

And somewhere, Minato and Eden, walking alone under the same winter sky, carried a different weight: the weight of loving someone else, and knowing they had just shattered hearts they could not repair.

The night felt impossibly long. The snow fell relentlessly. And the Ultimate Love Square had finally revealed its raw, unvarnished truth.

Chapter 15 – Heartbreak of the Ultimate Love Square

The winter sun barely managed to pierce the gray morning sky. Snow had fallen heavily overnight, blanketing the city in an unbroken layer of white. The world felt hushed, as though even the wind had softened to avoid disturbing the quiet grief lingering in four separate corners of the city.

Hina sat on a snow-covered bench near the frozen fountain outside campus. Her scarf was wrapped tightly around her neck, hiding her trembling hands. The confession she had poured from her heart last night to Minato replayed endlessly in her mind, each word twisting painfully with the memory of rejection.

Hina (internally, voice trembling): I loved him… I gave him everything I had… and he… he loves Ariel. How is that possible? How am I supposed to breathe?

Her tears froze on her lashes, and she blinked furiously to keep them from spilling. Every laugh she had imagined sharing with Minato, every stolen glance she had treasured, now felt like it had been borrowed from someone else's story, leaving her with an emptiness so vast she couldn't imagine filling it.

Across town, Ariel wandered the quiet streets, snow crunching beneath her boots. She pressed her gloved hands against her chest as if to hold her heart together. Eden's words echoed, each syllable slicing her like icy wind.

Ariel (internally, voice broken): He loves Hina… of course he does… he's calm, perfect… she makes him… happy. And me? I'm just… me. Not enough. Never enough.

She ducked into a small park, sinking onto a bench beneath a bare tree. The branches creaked as the wind pushed snow against her face. She let herself cry this time, the tears hot against the frozen air. No one was there to catch them, to tell her it would be okay. She was alone with the weight of a love unreturned.

Ariel (whispering, barely audible): "I… I thought maybe… maybe he could feel the same…"

Her voice cracked, and a small sob escaped. The cold didn't sting anymore. Her chest hurt too much to notice.

Meanwhile, Minato walked through the campus garden, his hands shoved deep in his coat

pockets. Normally composed, today he felt… hollow. Loving Ariel had seemed so simple inthought, but the look on Hina's face, the faint hope he had seen there, clawed at him unexpectedly.

Minato (internally, conflicted): I love Ariel… I've never doubted that… but… seeing her… Hina… crushed like that… why does my chest hurt so much?

He kicked at the snow absentmindedly, each step echoing in the empty courtyard. For the first time in months, he felt the sharp pangs of guilt pierce through his calm.

Eden, on the other side of the city, sat on the hood of his car, staring at the untouched snow on the windshield. His usual composure felt brittle, fragile beneath the weight of Ariel's hopeful eyes and the sight of Hina's heartbreak.

Eden (internally, voice quiet, rare vulnerability): I told Ariel the truth… she had every right to feel… everything. But why does my chest ache for her anyway? And Hina… she's… she's hurting… I can't fix this. I can't fix anyone.

His breath fogged in the air, clouding the scene with the heaviness of unspoken regrets and love that could not be returned the way it was given.

Back on campus, Hina pulled her scarf tighter, letting her tears fall freely now. Every snowflake that landed on her hair seemed to echo the fragile pieces of her heart breaking apart. She remembered the way Minato had looked at Ariel when he confessed. Not angry, not regretful—just certain. That certainty had left her floating in a storm of self-doubt and grief.

Hina (internally): I… I loved him. I did everything I could. And it wasn't enough. I… I can't… I can't stop loving him, but I have to… I have to let go.

Ariel, hours later, finally pulled herself from the bench and trudged home. Her hands were numb, her chest heavy, and every thought of Eden's calm eyes was now intertwined with a sharp sting of rejection.

Ariel (internally, raw, trembling): I thought love was enough… I thought maybe, just maybe… but no. He loves her. He… doesn't want me. Why does it hurt so much?

The cold wind carried away her sobs, leaving a quiet ache that seemed to settle into her bones.

That evening, the four converged by accident near the empty winter garden, the snow still thick underfoot. None of them spoke immediately. The silence was thick with unsaid words, with the raw ache of unreturned feelings.

Minato and Eden stood a few paces apart, their gazes on Ariel and Hina, respectively. Hina's red, tear-streaked face mirrored Ariel's pale, trembling form. The weight of the Ultimate Love Square pressed down like the cold snow around them—unforgiving, relentless, unavoidable.

Hina swallowed hard, voice small but steady: "I… I just want you to know… I… I'm sorry. For… everything."

Ariel, voice quivering: "I… yeah. Me too."

Minato exhaled slowly, guilt and love mixed in his tone: "You don't have to apologize… I… I can't… I can't change how I feel."

Eden's quiet voice cut through the winter stillness: "Neither can I. I said what I felt. I… just wish it didn't hurt this much."

The snow swirled around them, tiny diamonds of ice falling against tear-streaked cheeks. No one moved closer. No one comforted the other. Because sometimes… heartbreak is something you carry alone, even when surrounded by the people you love.

Hina looked down, her hands trembling against her scarf. Ariel's lips were pressed together, biting back sobs. Minato and Eden exchanged a brief glance—two hearts satisfied, two hearts shattered.

The winter garden, silent except for the whisper of snow and the soft rustling of trees, bore witness to the quiet agony of four hearts entwined and torn apart by the impossible geometry of love.

And somewhere, far away, Ruka would have screamed, fainted, and possibly thrown himself into the snow—but tonight, he was blissfully unaware.

The Ultimate Love Square had fractured. No one had gotten what they wanted. No one was truly unscathed.

Only the cold wind and falling snow seemed to understand the raw, aching truths of hearts given and hearts denied.

Chapter 16: The Ashes of the Square

Winter still clung to Sylphania like a ghost refusing to leave. The snow outside the academy courtyard had dulled into gray slush, yet the air remained sharp enough to sting the skin. Inside, however, it wasn't the cold weather that made everyone shiver—it was the silence.

The four of them—Hina, Ariel, Eden, and Minato—were no longer a group. Not the same laughter, not the same teasing, not the same warmth that had once made them inseparable. Instead, there was avoidance, glances stolen and immediately broken, footsteps turning the other way in hallways, voices swallowed before names could even be called.

Hina

Hina walked with her scarf pulled tight around her face, not just against the cold but against her own shame. Every time she caught sight of Minato's back in the crowd, her heart twisted into something unbearable. She hated herself for confessing—no, for hoping. She replayed his words over and over: "I'm sorry, Hina… I love Ariel."

They echoed like cruel bells.
Each time, she tried to swallow the lump in her throat, but the tears threatened anyway. So she stayed quiet, stayed away. Passing by Eden was no easier—his presence only reminded her of how messy everything had become. She had once leaned on him for everything, but now, even standing near him burned with awkwardness.

Ariel

Ariel sat by the library windows, tracing her finger against the frosted glass, trying to breathe through the storm inside her. She had been brave enough to confess, and Eden had been kind enough not to lie—yet his rejection cut deeper than any blade.
"I'm sorry, Ariel. I love Hina."

It rang in her head at night, stealing her sleep.
She wanted to hate Hina, to resent her for being loved by Eden—but she couldn't. Instead, she hated herself for not being enough. And seeing Minato only made it worse. He loved her, Ariel. He had said it with his eyes, with his silence, even though he had never said it out loud. But Ariel couldn't accept it now, not with Eden's words still raw in her chest.

So she avoided Minato. She avoided everyone. Sometimes she caught Hina's eyes from across the classroom—two girls, both broken in different ways, both carrying wounds neither could tend. And they would look away, pretending the other didn't exist.

Eden

Eden tried to keep his head high, but his guilt weighed him down like chains. He had broken Ariel's heart, and though he told himself honesty was kinder than lies, he couldn't shake the image of her trembling hands when she whispered her confession.
But the truth was still the truth: his heart had always been Hina's.

Now, though, even Hina wouldn't meet his eyes. She walked past him as if he were invisible, and that invisibility stung worse than any rejection he could have faced himself. He had thought confessing would free him, but instead it caged him in guilt and silence.

Minato

Minato, too, carried the heavy burden of rejection. He had hurt Hina, someone who had always been there for him, someone he cared for deeply in his own way. The look on her face the moment he said he loved Ariel haunted him like a scar he couldn't erase.

But what tore him apart even more was Ariel. She couldn't look at him anymore. She avoided his gaze, avoided his presence, as though his love was something poisonous she couldn't touch. He had told himself that love was meant to be patient, meant to endure. But now, he was left in the quiet aftermath, where the only thing patient was pain.

The academy buzzed with laughter and voices as always, yet for the four of them, it was like being trapped in separate worlds.

Where once there was a table where they all gathered to eat, there were now four corners of a room, each one silently occupied.
Where once there were footsteps side by side in the snow, now there were four lonely trails, branching away from each other.
Where once there was warmth, there was only the ashes of what used to be—the love square burned down to silence.

And though the world outside carried on, for the four of them, time had stopped. All that remained was heartbreak, awkward silence, and a gnawing question none of them dared to ask:

Can something broken ever be mended again?

Chapter 17: Unlikely Comfort

Two months passed, but the wounds from that night still bled quietly beneath their smiles.

The once lively square was silent whenever the four of them crossed paths. No more late-night laughter. No more shared secrets. Only heavy air filled with memories they wished they could erase.

Ariel sat by her window one evening, her cheek pressed against her palm, staring into the street below where kids played. Her heart throbbed with an emptiness she couldn't quite name until she admitted it—
It wasn't Eden she missed the most.
It was Minato.

He was chaos incarnate, the one who made everything brighter, the one whose jokes dragged her out of her moods, the one who was always too much but never enough. She could almost hear his laugh echoing in her mind. And yet… she couldn't forget the way he had stood in front of Hina that night, his voice raw, confessing: "I love Ariel."

Her chest ached. Because she didn't just lose Eden that night. She lost Minato too.

Meanwhile, Hina lay awake on her bed, staring at the ceiling. She had been rejected twice in one night—first by Minato, then by Eden's unexpected words. The sting still lingered. But even in her heartbreak, her heart betrayed her. It pulled her toward Eden. She could still hear his words: "I love Hina." It should have made her happy. But the timing, the way it crushed Ariel—it left her paralyzed between guilt and longing.

And the boys?

Minato wore his grin like armor, teasing classmates, cracking jokes louder than before. But when he was alone, his fists clenched. He remembered Hina's trembling face, her tears after his rejection. He remembered Ariel's silence after Eden crushed her with the truth. He remembered the night that burned them all. His heart was still stubborn—it wanted Ariel. But how could he go near her again after that?

Eden, quiet as ever, carried a weight he couldn't share. He thought of Ariel, the pain in her eyes when he told her his truth. It haunted him. He thought of Hina too, the girl he did love, but whose heart had been broken alongside Ariel's. Every choice he made felt like betrayal, no matter the direction.

Two months of silence carved distance between them. Passing by each other in school corridors was like walking through a graveyard of memories. Their gazes slipped away, their voices faltered into awkward greetings.

And yet… slowly, out of loneliness, cracks appeared in the wall of silence.

It started with necessity. A question about a group project. A brief exchange in the library.
“Can you hand me that?”
“Thanks.”
No eye contact. No warmth. Just words.

But those small sparks built something neither expected. Ariel and Hina found themselves sitting side by side more often—never planned, just drawn by something unspoken. Two broken hearts leaning against each other. Two girls who had loved and lost the same way.

Their conversations were short, careful at first. Then longer. Then deeper.
They never said the boys’ names out loud, but both knew the ghosts that hovered between them. Ariel missed Minato’s chaos. Hina missed Eden’s quiet steadiness. Both carried wounds from rejection. Both carried guilt for wanting what hurt the other.

And maybe, just maybe, that’s why their company felt like a fragile kind of comfort. Because only they knew how it felt.

Chapter 18: Apologies and Acceptances

Spring had arrived, yet their hearts were still carrying the weight of winter. The air smelled of fresh blossoms, but inside the group, silence lingered heavier than words. Four hearts tangled, scarred by misunderstandings, each one aching for the courage to speak.

The day began under the old sakura tree where they always met. Pink petals danced in the wind, soft and fragile, reminding them how easily hearts could break—and how tenderly they could be held.

Eden's voice broke first, raw and heavy.

"Hina… I've carried this weight too long. I tried to look at Ariel, but no matter what I did, my heart refused to move. It's yours… it's always been yours. I was a coward for not saying it sooner."

His hands trembled, not with fear, but with the desperate hope she would not turn away again.

Hina lowered her eyes, her chest tightening. Tears slipped free, not of sadness, but of regret.

"Eden… I was blind. I thought I loved Minato, but I was only chasing a shadow of something I thought I needed. You were always there, holding me when I broke, listening when no one else did… I hurt you, I pushed you away. And yet, here you are… still loving me."

Her voice cracked. "How could I not fall for you now?"

At the same time, Minato's gaze found Ariel. His eyes burned with the same storm that had consumed him for months.

"Ariel… I tried to give my heart to Hina, but it never belonged there. It was beating for you all along. I hid it… I denied it. But I can't anymore."

Ariel's lips parted, trembling.

"Minato… I was so foolish. I thought Eden was the one. I forced myself into a love that was never mine. But every time I looked back, every time I smiled, you were there, quietly holding me up. I should have seen it sooner… it was always you."

The four of them, once broken by rejection and confusion, now stood in fragile honesty. And then, as if the spring itself had been waiting for this moment, everything began to bloom.

Hina stepped forward, placing her hand on Eden's chest, feeling the rapid rhythm of his heartbeat.

"This is mine, isn't it?"

Eden's eyes burned with fire.

"It has never belonged to anyone else."

A tear slipped down her cheek, and he caught it with his thumb, whispering against her skin:

"Then let me be the man who never lets you cry again—except from happiness."

Hina leaned in, lips brushing his—soft, hesitant, but full of surrender. Their kiss carried the weight of unspoken years, of mistakes forgiven, of love finally embraced.

On the other side, Ariel reached for Minato's hand, fingers intertwining as if they had always belonged together.

"Minato… I don't want to run anymore. If I fall, I want it to be into you."

Minato's breath shook, his forehead pressing against hers.

"Then let me catch you, every single time. You don't need to be strong for me. Just be mine."

Ariel smiled through her tears and kissed him deeply, her whole body trembling as if her soul had finally found its home.

Two couples stood beneath the sakura blossoms, their hearts finally aligned, beating in harmony. Petals fell like blessings from the heavens, clinging to their hair and lips as if nature itself was celebrating their union.

Every touch was electric. Every kiss was fire. Every whispered promise was eternity.

Eden's arms wrapped around Hina's waist, pulling her close until there was no space left between them. His voice was husky, lips brushing her ear:
"Say it once, Hina… say you're mine."

She whispered back, breathless,
"I've always been yours. I just didn't see it before. But now… I'll never let go."

Minato cradled Ariel's face as though she were the most delicate treasure. His lips grazed hers again and again, not out of hunger, but devotion.

"Ariel… every scar, every mistake, every piece of me—it belongs to you."

Her voice trembled, but her eyes glowed.

“Then let’s never look back. From this moment… it’s only us.”

And beneath the falling blossoms, hearts once fractured finally became whole—two loves born from rejection, now burning brighter than anything they had ever known.

Chapter 19: First Real Date

The lantern-lit streets of United Nexis glowed with an amber warmth as evening deepened. Stalls lined the cobblestone paths, brimming with sweets, laughter, and the hum of violins played by street performers. The air smelled of candied nuts, roasted chestnuts, and blossoms carried by the night breeze.

Tonight was special. Not just any night at the festival, but their first real date—intentional, undeniable, one-on-one for both couples. Hearts pounded, breaths caught, and the world around them seemed to shimmer in anticipation.

Eden walked beside Hina, his usual quiet confidence softened into something gentler tonight. He noticed the way she fidgeted with her sleeve, the way her eyes darted nervously.

“Want a candy apple?” he asked suddenly, spotting a vendor.

Hina’s eyes lit up. “Y-Yes, please…”

He bought two, but instead of handing one directly, he held it out with a mischievous smirk. “Bite first.”

Hina hesitated, then leaned in, biting into the glossy crimson apple with a delicate crunch. Sweetness coated her lips.

Before she could even swallow, Eden leaned down, biting from the exact spot where her teeth had left a mark. Their lips didn’t touch, but the indirect kiss—the brush of apple and breath—made Hina’s heart stutter.

“It’s like you,” Eden murmured, eyes soft, molten with unspoken feelings.

Hina froze, cheeks flaring crimson. “Wh-what do you mean?”

“Sweet. Addicting. And now… I don’t want to stop.” His voice curled around her like a warm, tantalizing breeze.

Her legs threatened to give way. The candy apple became their secret, a chain of stolen, indirect kisses as Eden deliberately bit only where she had bitten, each one pulling her deeper into a dizzying, fluttering warmth.

Hina finally laughed softly, breathless, brushing a loose strand of hair from her face. “You’re impossible.”

“And irresistibly yours,” Eden replied, leaning close enough that his lips hovered near her ear. His warm breath sent shivers down her spine. “Can I… kiss you properly now?”

Hina’s heart raced. She nodded, barely a whisper, “Yes…”

And then Eden captured her lips in a tender, lingering kiss. Slow. Sweet. Filled with everything they hadn’t said in months. His hands cupped her waist, pulling her impossibly close, their breaths mingling, and for a moment, the world fell away—leaving only them, the sugar of the apple, and the spark of a love long awaited.

Meanwhile A few stalls down, Minato and Ariel wandered hand in hand, shoulders brushing as though gravity itself pulled them together. Lanterns danced in their eyes, casting golden highlights on Ariel’s hair that shimmered like strands of sunset silk.

Minato stopped suddenly, turning to face her under a glowing lantern. His mismatched eyes—one golden like molten sunlight, the other coral-brown like earth warmed by dusk—locked on hers.

“Ariel…” His voice softened, carrying months of unspoken words. He stepped closer, brushing a strand of her hair back with gentle reverence. “Your hair… it’s like a peony coral sunset and a coral charm—delicate, glowing, unforgettable. And your golden eyes…” He paused, drinking her in. “Every time I look into them, I feel myself falling… deeper and deeper… like I was made to lose myself in you.”

Ariel froze, cheeks flushed, heartbeat pounding. She whispered back, her voice trembling but sincere:

“And you… your eyes—different colors, one golden, one coral-brown… two worlds in one gaze. And your browny-grey hair… like moonlight, soft, eternal. My love.”

Minato’s chest tightened. Without thinking, he cupped her cheek, thumb brushing against her skin. “Ariel…”

She leaned into his touch. The noise of the festival melted away. Lanterns, music, laughter—all gone. Only them. Their lips met in a slow, trembling kiss, filled with promise, tenderness, and a fiery heat they both tried to hide.

When they pulled back, Ariel giggled, breathless. “We just… kissed in the middle of the street…”

Minato smirked, forehead resting against hers. “And I don’t regret a second. Not a single one.”

Later, near the fountain square, the two couples regrouped. Hina’s cheeks still burned pink from the candy apple, Eden holding the stick like a victorious trophy, smirking. Ariel clung to Minato’s arm, dazed from his poetic words and lingering touches.

“Looks like someone had fun,” Eden teased, glancing at Minato.

Minato smirked back. “Coming from the guy who stole half of Hina’s apple?”

Hina groaned, hiding her face in her hands. Ariel laughed, catching on instantly. “Ohhh, Eden… indirect kisses, huh?”

Eden winked at Hina. Her blush deepened, stomping her foot lightly. “S-stop teasing me!”

The four burst into laughter, the fireworks overhead glittering like scattered diamonds. Lanterns swayed, music floated on the breeze, and the night sky seemed to pulse with their every heartbeat.

As the laughter settled, Eden slid his hand into Hina’s, pressing it warmly. “I could walk through this entire festival holding your hand forever,” he whispered.

Hina squeezed back, leaning her head on his shoulder. “I think I’d like that,” she murmured, her voice soft as the night breeze.

Minato pulled Ariel closer, brushing a thumb along the back of her hand. “And I could spend every sunset looking at you,” he said, lips grazing her ear. Ariel shivered at the touch.

Their first real dates had been awkward, sweet, flirty, and electric—full of stolen glances, indirect kisses, teasing touches, hair tucks, whispered confessions, and the soft brush of lips against skin. Yet through it all, one thing was clear: this was only the beginning.

For Eden & Hina, for Minato & Ariel, tonight wasn’t just a festival night in United Nexis—it was a spark. A spark that promised to blaze brighter than any firework above them, a night that would live in their hearts forever, carrying the sweetness of candy apples, the warmth of whispered poetry, and the first taste of a love they had always longed for.

Chapter 20: Not a Square, But Something Stronger

The morning in United Nexis was crisp, the kind of spring day that made everything feel possible. The festival lights had faded, but the memory of yesterday's fireworks still lingered in hearts and in the lingering warmth of stolen touches and whispered words.

Eden and Hina met first, leaning against the fountain where petals from nearby cherry blossoms floated like drifting pink clouds.

"You know," Eden began, voice teasing but soft, "if we keep holding hands like this, people might start thinking we're some kind of… perfect square couple."

Hina laughed, a bright, melodic sound that made Eden's chest tighten. "A square?" she repeated, tilting her head. "You mean… stiff, boring, predictable?"

He smirked, brushing a strand of her hair back. "Exactly. But I don't want that. I want… something stronger. Something… us."

Hina's cheeks flushed as she leaned closer. "Stronger, huh?"

"Yes," he said, voice dropping low, eyes locking onto hers with that quiet, molten intensity she could never resist. "Stronger than words, stronger than teasing, stronger than candy apples and stolen kisses."

Before she could respond, he leaned in, brushing his lips against hers, slow and teasing, lingering just long enough to make her shiver. Hina laughed softly against his lips, pulling back just enough to whisper, "You're impossible."

"And irresistibly yours," he replied, nudging her shoulder with his.

A few steps away, Minato and Ariel were walking through the flower market, sunlight catching his mismatched eyes—golden and coral-brown—making them shine like twin worlds of fire and earth. Ariel twirled a daisy between her fingers.

"You know," she said, smiling mischievously, "I think you're trying too hard to make me melt with compliments."

He raised a brow, lips twitching. "Trying? Me? I don't try. I just… speak the truth. Your hair glows like sunset, your eyes steal me every single time, and—" He leaned closer, voice dropping into a playful growl, "—you're mine. Forever."

Ariel gasped, cheeks warming as she swung a playful fist at his shoulder. “Forever, huh? Bold claim.”

Minato caught her hand mid-swing, holding it against his chest. “Bold enough to match the love I feel for you.”

“And dangerous enough to make me swoon,” Ariel murmured, leaning her head against his shoulder.

He chuckled, brushing his fingers through her hair, golden strands catching the sunlight. “Good. Then swoon all you like. I won’t stop.”

By midday, the two couples had regrouped near the fountain again. Eden and Minato were comparing who had the better “charm game” with their girls.

“Clearly,” Eden said, smirking, “my indirect candy apple kisses are superior.”

Minato rolled his eyes, though a small grin tugged at his lips. “Sure… if you like cheating.”

Hina elbowed Eden playfully. “Cheating? Really?”

Eden shrugged innocently, his lips twitching into a teasing smile. “I call it… strategy.”

Ariel laughed, stepping closer to Minato. “I think he’s just lucky you’re slow on the uptake.”

“You mean adorable,” Minato corrected, winking at her. “And lucky is just part of being with me.”

“Or being me,” Ariel shot back, leaning her head on his shoulder. “Let’s not forget whose heart you stole first.”

Their laughter mingled with Hina and Eden’s teasing banter, creating a bubble of warmth and joy. It wasn’t just friendship, nor was it just love—it was a bond stronger than any “square” structure, filled with spontaneity, flirty mischief, and the kind of intimacy that didn’t need labels.

As the sun began to set, lanterns reappeared along the streets, casting the world in amber and gold. Eden slid his arm around Hina’s waist, pulling her close.

“Not a square,” he murmured into her hair. “Something stronger. Something ours.”

Hina tilted her head to look at him, lips curling into a mischievous smile. “Then let’s make it unbreakable.”

Nearby, Minato and Ariel shared the same sentiment, fingers intertwined as they wandered under the glowing lanterns.

“Stronger than words,” Ariel whispered.

“Stronger than fire,” Minato replied, brushing his lips over her forehead.

“And stronger than us being silly, teasing idiots?” she teased.

“Even stronger,” he said, eyes sparkling as he leaned down for a kiss that was gentle, electric, and completely theirs.

The four of them laughed, kissed, and held each other as night fell over United Nexis. Not a perfect square. Not just two couples. Something stronger—flirty, romantic, funny, lovely, and unbreakable.

Tonight, they weren’t just discovering love—they were discovering that sometimes, love itself could be something daring, mischievous, and completely unstoppable.

Chapter 21: Graduation

The sun rose over United Nexis, golden and warm, painting the school grounds in soft light. Graduation day had finally arrived. The air smelled of fresh grass, chalk dust, and the faint sweetness of celebratory cakes waiting in the cafeteria.

Eden, Hina, Minato, and Ariel walked together, now comfortably a couple in every sense, their hands occasionally brushing, fingers intertwining naturally. Their gowns fluttered lightly in the morning breeze, the weight of the black robes somehow lighter than the years of memory they carried.

“Can you believe it?” Hina whispered, leaning against Eden’s shoulder. “Four years… gone in a blink.”

Eden smirked, pulling her close. “And yet somehow, I feel like we just started yesterday… only now we’re older, wiser… and still hopelessly in love.”

Hina rolled her eyes, teasingly. “Hopelessly? Speak for yourself.”

Before Eden could retort, a familiar voice called out, smooth and teasing, cutting through the morning chatter.

“Well, well, well… look at all you lovebirds,” Ruka said, leaning casually against the school gate with his signature smirk. His hair fell perfectly into place despite the wind, and his bright eyes—always a little mischievous—sparkled as he watched them approach.

Hina groaned, burying her face in her hands. “Oh no… here comes trouble.”

Eden chuckled, tugging her hand. “You mean our favorite trouble.”

Ruka raised a brow, looking at each of them in turn. “Favorite? I think I was everyone’s favorite, actually. Remember the good old days? Confessions, awkward moments, tears, and endless… embarrassment?”

Ariel laughed, nudging Minato. “Oh, believe me, we remember. You were the one… all four of us practically chased after you before realizing the obvious.”

“Obvious?” Ruka feigned offense. “I was charming! How could anyone resist?”

“You mean irritatingly charming,” Hina muttered, earning a laugh from everyone—including Eden, who leaned in to whisper, “Don’t be jealous, I’m still your favorite.”

Hina blushed furiously. “I am not jealous!”

Ruka shook his head, smirking. “Classic. You never change, do you?”

They wandered across the courtyard together, sharing memories. Every corner brought a flashback:

Ruka tripping over a desk in first year while carrying Hina's books.

Minato nervously passing Ariel a note that accidentally landed in Ruka's hands.

Eden trying to impress everyone with his quiet strength, only for Ruka to tease him mercilessly.

They laughed, the sound loud and unrestrained, echoing across the courtyard. But beneath the laughter, there was a bittersweet ache—their school years were ending.

Finally, they reached the graduation stage, caps in hand. Ruka leaned casually against the railing, watching them with an expression somewhere between pride and nostalgia.

"So… couples, huh?" he teased. "Didn't think you four would survive high school without me making it chaotic."

Eden grinned. "We survived because of you, honestly. Someone had to keep us on our toes."

Ariel smirked at Minato. "And now we're all graduating… but don't think this is the end of teasing."

"Oh, I wouldn't dream of it," Ruka said, eyes glinting. "But seriously… you four have grown. Stronger, braver, and… happier. Makes me proud, even if you all stole my heart first."

Hina laughed, eyes shining with tears she refused to shed. "We might've confessed first, Ruka… but you were always the one who made it unforgettable."

Eden draped an arm over her shoulder. "Here's to new beginnings, and to keeping chaos alive wherever we go."

Minato and Ariel exchanged a glance, fingers lacing tightly. "To new adventures," Ariel said softly.

"And to never forgetting the ones who shaped us," Minato added.

Ruka smiled, tipping his graduation cap back. "You four… seriously. Don't ever change. But also… don't forget to make me famous in your stories, alright?"

They laughed again, hearts light yet heavy with the ache of endings.

The ceremony began, caps flying, cheers rising. Eden held Hina’s hand, Minato held Ariel’s, and all four of them looked toward the horizon—bright, endless, and full of possibilities.

Ruka watched them go, smirking, already planning how he’d make their post-graduation life just as chaotic and unforgettable as the years that led them here.

Because endings were only beginnings in disguise—and in United Nexis, their story was far from over.

Chapter 22: The Marriage Proposal

The air was crisp with early spring, carrying the faint scent of cherry blossoms and freshly cut grass. United Nexis was calm that evening, the hustle of the city softened under a lavender sky that stretched endlessly over the horizon. The perfect backdrop for something unforgettable.

Minato had been planning this for weeks. Every detail—every moment—had to feel like it had always been meant to happen. He guided Ariel to the top of the old city tower, the place they had accidentally discovered during one of their first dates. Lanterns swayed gently, casting a soft glow across the stone walls.

Ariel's eyes sparkled with curiosity. "Minato… why are we here? It's… beautiful."

He smiled, nervousness hidden beneath his usual confident air. "Because… this place, it's special. Like us. Quiet, yet alive. And because… I want the first words I say to you tonight to be the most important I've ever said."

Ariel blinked, her heart fluttering. "Minato…"

He took her hands in his, fingers entwining as though they'd been designed to fit perfectly together. His mismatched eyes—the golden one like molten sunlight, the coral-brown like dusk—locked onto hers, soft and unyielding.

"Ariel," he began, voice low and steady, "from the moment I first saw you, I knew you were different. Every glance, every laugh, every quiet moment… you became my world without me even realizing it. Your warmth, your light… I've tried to find the words to tell you how much I need you, how much I love you…"

He knelt on one knee, the lavender sky framing him like a painting. From his coat pocket, he revealed a ring that caught the fading sunlight, scattering tiny rainbows across her face.

Ariel gasped, covering her mouth with trembling hands. "Minato… are you…?"

"Yes," he said, his voice barely above a whisper, yet every word filled with a lifetime of emotion. "Ariel, will you marry me? Will you let me spend the rest of my life learning every corner of your heart, protecting you, loving you… forever?"

Tears welled in her eyes, her voice breaking but fierce with joy. "Yes! Yes, Minato! I've always… always wanted this… always wanted you."

He slipped the ring onto her finger, the metal cold but the moment burning with warmth. She threw her arms around him, laughing and crying at once, and he held her close, whispering against her hair, "Forever starts now, my love. Forever with you."

A few days later, Eden had his turn. He had waited for the right moment, knowing that the perfect proposal wasn't just about words—it was about feeling. The city park, alive with the first blooms of spring, had been chosen with care.

Hina wandered with him along a path lined with sakura trees, petals drifting lazily down like confetti. Eden stopped near a small pond, its surface reflecting the pink blossoms and the warm glow of lanterns strung nearby.

"Hina… do you remember the first time we shared a candy apple?" Eden asked, a playful smile tugging at his lips. "You bit it, I stole it… and somehow, I never wanted to stop stealing from you."

Hina giggled, covering her face with her hands. "Eden… you mean that still?"

He stepped closer, kneeling on one knee without hesitation. In his hand was a simple but elegant ring that caught the pink light around them. "I do. I've stolen every piece of your heart already, Hina… but I want the rest. I want your laughter in the mornings, your hand in mine in every storm, your love for the rest of my life. Will you… marry me?"

Hina's eyes shimmered with tears, her cheeks flushed from the evening chill and the intensity of the moment. "Eden… yes! Of course I will! I've been yours… always yours!"

Eden smiled, sliding the ring onto her finger, and they embraced under the falling petals. His lips found hers in a kiss that was soft, yet electric—a perfect mirror of all the stolen, sweet, and tender moments they'd shared before.

Later, the four of them—Minato, Ariel, Eden, and Hina—celebrated together in a quiet garden, laughing, teasing, and savoring the new weight of promise and love. Ruka had even appeared, smirking at the chaos they'd all caused him in the past.

"You two are officially insane," he said, shaking his head at Minato and Ariel, then Eden and Hina.

Hina laughed, elbowing Eden playfully. "We've always been a little insane, haven't we?"

Minato grinned at Ariel, cupping her face. "And somehow… the perfect kind of insane."

Ariel leaned into him, whispering, "Forever with you… finally, forever."

Eden held Hina close, the two of them swaying beneath the pink sky. "And I… finally get to call you mine, every day, for the rest of our lives."

The sun dipped below the horizon, painting the sky with coral, gold, and lavender, as if the world itself was celebrating.

United Nexis had never felt so alive, so warm, so full of love. Two couples, hearts entwined, promising forever, standing at the cusp of the next great adventure—together.

Chapter 23: The Ultimate Square is Now Two Ultimate Couples

The sun was setting over United Nexis, casting golden streaks across the city as if blessing the world itself. At a grand but cozy dining hall, the four friends—Eden, Hina, Minato, and Ariel—sat around a long table, laughter spilling into the warm evening air. Their marriages had been celebrated, promises exchanged, and love sealed. Finally, the “Ultimate Square” of years past had become two unbreakable, devoted couples.

Eden squeezed Hina’s hand under the table, and she leaned into him with that familiar soft smile that had captured his heart years ago. Minato and Ariel exchanged a glance, their mismatched eyes glowing with the same fire that had first pulled them together, hands brushing across the table.

The dinner was lively. Eden and Hina had twins now—two eighteen-year-old boys, mischievous and full of energy, constantly teasing their mother and father. Sitting beside them was their daughter, Luna, sixteen, a miniature replica of Hina in her dramatic expressions and sharp wit. On the other side, Minato and Ariel had a seventeen-year-old son, full of charm and teasing, and a ten-year-old daughter, radiant and sweet.

As dessert arrived, Luna tilted her head, curiosity sparkling in her eyes. “Mom… did you ever fall in love with anyone besides Dad?”

Hina choked on her fork, her cheeks flaming. Eden nearly snorted, already anticipating a dramatic story. Hina glanced around nervously. “Well… yes. I fell for… the wrong person first.”

“Who?” Luna pressed, leaning forward.

Hina hesitated, then laughed softly. “You remember Uncle Minato? Your dad’s… friend from way back.”

Luna’s eyes widened. “Yes! Him?”

Hina nodded, a small blush coloring her cheeks. “I fell for him in college. I even proposed… and he rejected me. He told me his heart belonged to Ariel.”

Across the table, Ariel’s cheeks flared pink, and she squeezed Minato’s hand. “And your aunt,” she said, teasing, “proposed to your dad. He rejected me, saying he loved Hina.”

The table froze for a heartbeat, the air thick with the absurdity and drama of the past. Then, laughter erupted from every corner. Eden groaned, covering his face. “That… was brutal. Heartbreaking, actually.”

“But also insane,” Hina added, shaking her head, smiling at Ariel. “We were… the ultimate love square. Awkward, messy, chaotic—but now…” She reached out across the table, hand brushing Ariel’s in a silent acknowledgment. “…now it’s just two ultimate couples.”

“Wow,” Luna said, eyes shining. “It really was insane… but I get it now. You four… somehow made it work.”

Meanwhile, Minato’s son leaned over to his little sister, whispering with a grin, “Mom, Dad… you both are the ultimate couple. I can’t believe you four became the ultimate couple after… you know… the ultimate love square.”

The little daughter giggled, tugging on Ariel’s sleeve. “It’s like a fairy tale, right, Mom?”

Minato laughed, the sound warm and deep. Ariel leaned her head against his shoulder, smiling. “Fairy tales have nothing on us,” he murmured.

Eden ruffled the twins’ hair, and Hina laughed, pretending to scold him. “Behave, you little monsters! You’re not making this easy!”

Laughter, teasing, and gentle nudges filled the room. Despite the chaos of their past—confessions, heartbreak, misunderstandings—they were together now. Love had endured, had grown stronger, had become unshakable.

Years later, as the children played nearby, Eden and Hina sat hand in hand, sharing quiet whispers and memories of that first candy apple date. Minato and Ariel leaned against each other, smiling at the playful antics of their son and daughter.

The ultimate love square had become two ultimate couples. Perfectly paired, messy in the best ways, and happy beyond measure.

United Nexis never felt so alive, so full of laughter, love, and family. The four friends-turned-lovers, now families themselves, had reached the happiest ending they could have ever imagined. And somewhere, deep in their hearts, they all knew—this was just the beginning of a lifetime of happiness.

The End

Moral of the Story

Love is never simple, and life is never linear. Hearts may be confused, choices may lead to heartbreak, and paths may twist unexpectedly—but honesty, courage, and patience allow love to find its true place.

Friendship, trust, and forgiveness are the foundation of lasting relationships. Even in messy, complicated “squares” of emotion, true connection, vulnerability, and persistence can transform heartbreak into unshakable bonds.

Ultimately, love is about timing, acceptance, and growing together—embracing both the chaos and the beauty that life throws your way. And when it’s real, it creates not just couples, but families, legacies, and happiness that endure across generations.

Ending Summary / Closing Scene

The story concludes with a perfect, heartwarming resolution:

- The Ultimate Couples: Eden & Hina and Minato & Ariel are together, truly happy, having overcome heartbreak, misunderstandings, and the complicated “love square” of their youth.

- Family Life: 20 years later, both couples have children. Eden & Hina have twin sons (18) and a daughter (16), while Minato & Ariel have a 17-year-old son and a 10-year-old daughter. Their families are full of laughter, teasing, and love.

- Reflections on the Past: Through conversations with their children, the past is revealed—how each fell for the “wrong” person at first, faced rejection, but ultimately found their true partners.

- Friendship Forever: Their old friend Ruka and the group’s shared history remind them of their enduring bonds beyond romance.

- The Moral: Love is messy but worth it. Honest communication, courage, forgiveness, and patience can turn heartbreak into lifelong happiness.

Final Feeling: The book ends on a joyful, emotional, and celebratory note, with fireworks of family, love, and friendship—showing that the ultimate square became two ultimate couples and everyone is finally living happily ever after.

Author’s Note

Dear Reader,

Every story has its beginnings, its trials, and moments that take our breath away. This tale of Eden, Hina, Minato, and Ariel began with laughter, confusion, and hearts learning to find their way. They stumbled, loved the wrong people, faced heartbreak—but through it all, they never gave up on honesty, courage, or forgiveness.

In the end, the “ultimate square” became two ultimate couples, and they found happiness not just in love, but in friendship, trust, and family. Life isn’t always simple, and love is never without its twists—but it is always worth it.

This is my third novel. The first one I wrote was Shadow Throne: The Velvet Code, and the second was Wrong Number, Right Feelings. They are stories close to my heart, full of twists, emotions, and unforgettable characters. I hope you enjoyed them and this journey too.

To you, dear reader, remember: sometimes the path to love is messy, funny, heartbreaking, and beautiful all at once. But if you follow your heart, speak your truth, and embrace those who truly care, the ending can be brighter than you ever imagined.

Thank you for joining me on this journey through tears, laughter, and the sparks of young love that grew into lifelong happiness.

With all my heart,
ShadowK